Library
Theological Seminary
JAN 25 1963

BS535
.T76

LITERARY

CHARACTERISTICS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

OF

THE BIBLE.

BY

REV. W. TRAIL, A. M.,

AUTHOR OF "THE CHRISTIAN GRACES" AND "UNSEEN REALITIES."

CINCINNATI:
HITCHCOCK & WALDEN.
NEW YORK:
CARLTON & LANAHAN.

PREFACE TO THE AMERICAN EDITION.

THE author has brought to the composition of this volume a taste, a culture, and an earnestness of purpose which have left their impress upon every chapter. He manifestly entered into the spirit of his work. While, with a master hand, he discloses the beauties of the Bible—its high literary characteristics, and its wonderful achievements—he is constantly directing the reader to its Divine authorship. No one can rise from the perusal of this work without feeling that the blessed volume of which it treats, is,

> "On every line,
> Marked with the seal of high Divinity;
> On every leaf, bedewed with drops of love
> Divine, and with the eternal heraldry
> And signature of God Almighty stamped,
> From first to last."

The religious public of Great Britain have attested their appreciation of its value in the successive editions of it that have been demanded. The English press has also bestowed upon it the highest encomiums. It now remains to be seen whether it shall have equal appreciation from the Christian public of America.

We have also felt desirous of supplying a want in our denominational literature. Our book catalogue in this department was utterly wanting. As a help to a better appreciation of the character of the Bible and its relations to the literary productions of the human mind uninspired, and also to the better appreciation of its influence upon the literature, science, and intellect of the world, this volume should go into the hands of every Bible student; it should find a place in every Christian home. The Bible class, or Sunday school teacher, who shall read it consecutively, will have his views of the Bible enlarged, and find himself more fully equipped for his work. No Sunday school library should be without a copy. But to the minister, preaching Christ, and presenting the claims of the Bible, it will be found invaluable.

By its fluent style, its line of thought and mode of discussion, it is eminently adapted to popular reading. It is, in fact, like the Bible itself, *a people's book*. Learned criticisms—as dry as learned, and as long as dry—we have in abundance. But popular presentations of the Bible, exhibiting its striking characteristics and its adaptations, are few and rare. We have gone over its pages carefully, and given it such adaptation to its mission in America as seemed desirable.

With these brief notes, we now commend it to the Christian public. D. W. C.

CINCINNATI, OCTOBER 1, 1863.

PREFACE TO THE ENGLISH EDITION.

It is not without considerable hesitation that I present this volume to the public. The subject, in detached parts, has been treated by far abler pens; but, so far as I am aware, the attempt has not been made, in any single volume at least, to exhibit the subject with the same comprehensiveness and system. Where I had the labors of preceding writers to direct and aid me, I felt less hesitation; where I had not these guides, the importance of the subject not unfrequently caused me to doubt my own ability to handle it, so as, while gaining the ear of those who are of literary taste and culture, there should be nothing to offend the sensibilities of a pure and simple piety. I had an abiding conviction that a free exhibition of the literature of the Bible is calculated to strengthen our belief in its Divine inspiration; but on the other hand, it needed caution, while freely exhibiting its literary characteristics, not to present the Bible as merely a literary production. I have striven to use this caution; so that, although I do not on every other page reiterate my

belief in its Divine inspiration, I am hopeful that the reader will find nothing in this volume which can have a tendency to put away from his mind the thought which was constantly present to my own—that the book whose own literary beauties I examine, and whose influence on literature and the arts I endeavor to trace and record, is none other than the Book of God. I shall have sadly failed in my design if what I present to the reader does not increase his devout admiration of the Bible as a book, which is as divinely beautiful as it is divinely true.

Notwithstanding my misgivings whether I have been at all able to do justice to so important a subject, I am fain to persuade myself that till some one more competent to the task shall undertake it, the present volume may, in some small degree, supply what I have long felt to be a desideratum in sacred literature.

CONTENTS.

PART FIRST.

LITERARY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE BIBLE.

CHAPTER I.

PAGE.
A Defense and Enforcement of the Study of the Literature of the Bible 13

CHAPTER II.

The Style of the Scriptures 35

CHAPTER III.

The Figurative in the Scriptures 51

CHAPTER IV.

The Figurative in the Scriptures—continued 65

CHAPTER V.

The Symbolic in the Scriptures 89

CHAPTER VI.

The Sublime in the Scriptures 102

CHAPTER VII.

The Pathetic in the Scriptures 121

CHAPTER VIII.

PAGE.

THE PICTURESQUE IN THE SCRIPTURES..... 141

CHAPTER IX.

HEBREW POETRY..... 161

CHAPTER X.

HEBREW POETRY—CONTINUED..... 183

CHAPTER XI.

THE HISTORICAL IN THE SCRIPTURES..... 198

CHAPTER XII.

THE BIOGRAPHIES OF SCRIPTURE..... 212

CHAPTER XIII.

THE TWO STANDARDS OF LITERARY MERIT..... 221

PART SECOND.

LITERARY ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE BIBLE.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY..... 229

CHAPTER II.

THE BIBLE, THE PIONEER OF LITERATURE AND THE ARTS..... 241

CHAPTER III.

THE BIBLE, THE PROMOTER OF LITERATURE AND THE ARTS — MODERN POETRY..... 256

CHAPTER IV.

PAGE.

THE BIBLE THE PROMOTER OF LITERATURE AND THE ARTS—MODERN PAINTING..... 276

CHAPTER V.

THE BIBLE THE PROMOTER OF LITERATURE AND THE ARTS—MODERN SCULPTURE AND MUSIC..... 291

CHAPTER VI.

THE BIBLE THE PROMOTER OF LITERATURE AND THE ARTS—MODERN GENERAL LITERATURE..... 302

CHAPTER VII.

THE BIBLE THE RESTORER OF LITERATURE AND THE ARTS—WHEN EUROPE HAD FALLEN BACK INTO MILITARY BARBARISM..... 313

CHAPTER VIII.

THE BIBLE THE RESTORER OF INTELLECTUAL LIFE—WHEN EUROPE HAD SUNK INTO AN EFFEMINATING SUPERSTITION..... 330

CHAPTER IX.

THE INFLUENCE OF THE BIBLE ON SCIENCE..... 344

CHAPTER X.

CONCLUSION..... 356

PART FIRST.

LITERARY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE BIBLE.

THE

LITERARY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE BIBLE.

CHAPTER I.

A DEFENSE AND ENFORCEMENT OF THE STUDY OF THE LITERATURE OF THE BIBLE.

THERE are certain prejudices from which dissent should be entered with a frank acknowledgment of the righteousness of the feeling from which they spring. The subject which we purpose to discuss on these pages will at once suggest a case in which this ought to be done. There are not a few who confess to a strong disinclination to hear the Bible spoken of as a literary production. Now, with the feelings of these we are free to own a sympathy; since what disinclines them to associate it with literature is their devout reverence for the Word of God. And we should have to blame ourselves did we not frankly admit this, while expressing our entire dissent from their opinion. Indeed, justice to ourselves requires this, for we would not willingly be thought to be one whit behind them in our reverence for that Book which, as devoutly as

they, we believe to be the very Word of God. With a faith as simple as theirs we would bow to its Divine authority, and with equal reverence we would approach its holy pages. To us, as to them, it is full of God; and could we suppose that there is irreverence or even idle curiosity in examining its literary characteristics, certainly we would never have essayed the task. We venture on our subject not without some misgivings; but among these is not any fear that a study of its literature will lead our readers the less devoutly to believe in the Divine inspiration of the Bible.

This disinclination which some avow to hear the Sacred Volume spoken of as a literary production, as seems to us, is calculated to do it the great injustice of prejudicing against it such as are of literary tastes and culture; and it may, besides, be shown to proceed from more than one misconception.

Thus, when the suspicion is expressed that it derogates from the Divine authority of the Scriptures to have their literary merits tried by the laws of human criticism, we venture to be of the opinion that this suspicion proceeds on a misconception of what these laws are. They are the exponents, not of mere conventional fashions in taste, still less of the caprices of individual opinion, but of those universal notions of the beautiful, which have their seats in human nature itself, having been implanted there by the Creator, who, in this respect, has formed his creatures after his own image. For,

when reviewing all that he had made, he pronounced it to be very good; doubtless he tried the visible forms by those mental conceptions of beauty and fitness which in him are eternal, and in us from him derived. Each several work was good, as answering to his great idea. Now, it is these fundamental principles of beauty, which have a Divine origin, that a correct criticism applies to the Scriptures. We can not, therefore, see how it shall derogate from their Divine authority or majesty to be tested by a standard which is itself divine.

The truth is, we can not avoid applying the principles or laws of taste to the Word of God, any more than we can refrain from applying them to his works. And, as we have just said, there is the Divine sanction, or rather the Divine example, for our doing the latter. With regard to the natural landscape, the object of the devout student is not to pronounce how it ought to have been laid out, but rather to discover and expound the actual beauties which adorn it. So shall it be the office of the critic, not to bend the Scriptures to the rules of his art, so much as it will be to show that in them these rules have their finest verification. And surely this task is not incompatible with a faith both simple and devout. It shall not nurse the arrogance of pride, but the humility of devotion. Not petulant to fault, but disposed to praise, its work is every way fitted to increase the sentiments of a devout admiration. For, when the critic brings

his own conceptions of the beautiful within the precincts of inspiration, and shall find, as he is sure to do, that each utterance of the sacred oracle gives full expression to these conceptions and might be said to be the parent voice of which they are the feeble though articulate echo, it is impossible that his admiration of this Divine book shall not be greatly increased. The progress of criticism has enabled him to reduce our notions of the beautiful and the sublime to certain rules; but here is a most ancient book, great part of which was written during the rudest infancy of literature, which has anticipated these rules; thus showing that its author was most intimately acquainted with the yet unstudied laws of our emotional nature. And surely the discovery of this fact is calculated to raise our admiration both of the book and its author.

Then, further, if it is thought that an examination of the literature of the Bible implies that we place it on a level with other books, we must pronounce this also to be a misconception. For in order rightly to institute the comparison, so far from placing it in the same catalogue with these, we must needs proclaim it to be altogether unique. And although it is not to be expected of us, that on every other page we shall keep reiterating our belief in its divinity, the avowal with which we start in making the comparison is, that it stands forth the one Divine composition which bibliography authenticates; so that there are certain respects in

which it were manifestly improper to compare it with any other composition whatever. Our attempt to show it to be preëminently *the* book, can never succeed if we lose sight of the fact, though not needlessly reasserting it, that it exclusively is the *Divine* book. Hence, in any comparison we may institute between the Bible and other books, we at once except the authorship and subject-matter; for in respect of these we should no more think of comparing the Bible with even the very greatest productions of uninspired genius, than we should think of comparing Nature's own artistic masterpiece—the bow in the cloud—with the streak of paint-work by which the human artist attempts to imitate it on his canvas. Yet there are certain features which the Bible, as being itself a book, necessarily possesses in common with other books; and it is in respect of these only that we should think of comparing it with them. Thus, for example, its language is comparable with theirs, seeing that it is composed not in any unique dialect of its own, but in two of the ancient vernaculars. Then, also, it contains history, so that we can institute a comparison between Moses and Luke as historians, and Livy or Herodotus. Also it contains poetry; hence the merits of David, or Asaph, or Ezekiel as poets, can be compared with those of Homer, or Virgil, or Milton. But all the while, so far from forgetting that the Bible is a Divine book, we keep this ground idea constantly in the forefront, so that

the comparison at once assumes, and throughout maintains this form: here is God's style and man's style—God's history and man's history—God's poetry and man's poetry, which, both being presented in human language, can be compared; and the result of that comparison is to determine whether the Book of God does not surpass all other books in literary excellence, just as the works of God, on being compared with all other works, are found to excel them in artistic finish.

We may not, then, allow ourselves to be forbidden the amenities of sacred literature by a weak pietism which will not itself, nor let others, enter the temple of sacred truth by the gate which is called "beautiful." Nor does it content us merely to defend, for we must go further, and enforce it as a duty to study the literature of the Bible.

I. Our first argument shall be drawn from the constitution of the human mind itself. One of its primary and essential faculties is imagination. Without this creative faculty, how much more limited would be the range of human thought! and without this softening and ornative faculty, in how dry a light would the material forms in nature be seen—sharp, cold, and mechanical! while the thoughts of the mind itself would either be abrupt impressions with scarcely any coherence, or reasoned inferences hung together by cold links of logic. Depose imagination from its seat among the mental faculties, and you introduce a schism into the soul, the result

of which would be that its highest affections would remain unexercised. For without the fascinating combinations in which imagination groups, and the picturesque lights in which it variegates the conclusions of the reason, the objects of perception, the reminiscences of memory, and the anticipations of hope, it may be questioned whether the exercises of these faculties would long be tolerable. But assign to imagination its due place among the mental powers, and then all are harmonized—the sharp angles at which they would infringe and grate on each other are rounded and smoothed; intellectual labor becomes a pleasure, while the intellect itself is exalted, refined, enlarged.

From its excursive nature, the imagination requires to be kept under the government of the understanding, otherwise it might run into mere fantasies. But when under proper control, the beautiful forms and imagery into which it shapes our thoughts, though some of them more beautiful than actually do exist, are not necessarily untruthful or delusive. For the idealizations, we do not say of mere fancy, but of the imagination in its higher sense, are a reality and a truth, in so far as they are the expression of that yearning in the human soul after some things better, purer, more beautiful—in short, after perfection.

It can not, therefore, be that so sublime a faculty was given to man unless to be used by him. And in cultivating it, are we to throw open to it every

domain except that in which it might expatiate with the purest pleasure, and from which it may bring back the richest gatherings? In a word, is imagination to be excluded from the precincts of revelation? We emphatically answer, that no such interdiction has come from the God of revelation. On the contrary, the pages of his inspired prophets are made redolent with the voice of song, as if purposely to woo the approach of that faculty which poetry specially addresses. And even where the voice of song is not heard there often breathes the spirit of poetry throughout the Bible, which, not to be a continued poem, is perhaps, of all books, the most poetical. Then the style of the Scriptures is so richly figurative; and the pattern which has been wrought into the web of inspiration is of the most gorgeous description. Now, from this two inferences appear to be inevitable. First, that imagination was employed in the composition of the Scriptures; for without their possession of this faculty, and in a high degree, neither Ezekiel into his prophetic, nor John into his apocalyptic visions, could have worked so splendid an imagery; not less then this faculty, than memory or reason, was inspired in these writers. Second, if God availed himself of the imaginative faculty of the writers in the composition of the Scriptures, he certainly must have intended the same faculty to be used in the perusal of them. For just as there are beauties on the pages of a Milton, or a Cowper, which the reader

would not discover, and still less appreciate, unless he brings imagination's eye to peruse what it needed imagination's finger to pencil; so is it with the pages of Isaiah, or Jeremiah, or Ezekiel. Fully to perceive the beauties of these writers, we must bring with us the same imaginative faculty, which in them was inspired, and which in us may be rightly guided by the same Spirit.

Closely allied with the imagination there belongs to the human mind another faculty, which, by a metaphor borrowed from one of the bodily senses, has been called taste. Though mental philosophers differ as to whether this is an original or a derivative faculty, they are all agreed that it is universal in human nature. Exactly to define this faculty were not easy, for it is indeed, as Edmund Burke says of it, "delicate and aerial," and "seems too volatile to endure even the chains of a definition." Without precisely defining we may describe taste to be that faculty of the mind by which we both perceive and enjoy whatever is beautiful or sublime in any works, whether Divine or human. The pleasures of taste are of a pure and exalted kind, and though in themselves not strictly virtuous, yet they have this much to do with virtue, that one of the best aids in cultivating a correct taste is goodness of heart, or moral purity; for when it is allied with this its perceptions are quickened and its pleasures enhanced.

Can this fine faculty have justice done to it if it

is interdicted the contemplation of the literary beauties of the Bible? We certainly think not. For believing as we do that the *created* is, as it were, the vestibule to the *revealed*—the beautiful and sublime in form as exhibited in the former preparing the mind, so far at least, to appreciate the higher beauty and sublimity of spiritual ideas in the latter—we claim for taste that if it comes with its eye purged as with rue, it shall be admitted through the vestibule into the shrine of the temple. And if it shall be said that all its eye can perceive is the mere embroidery or ornaments on the vestments of celestial truth, and all its ear can listen to is the music of her voice, then we may answer that he who can do this is so far prepared for gazing on her form and entering into her thoughts.

The truths of physical science have often to be searched for over paths that are rugged, and in places where beauty rarely dwells. On the rough steep of the mountain, among the rifted rocks, down in dark mines, the geologist, with toilsome patience, has to gather the materials of his science. But when he comes to some sequestered nook, where the fossil-bed is festooned with flowers, as if a couch prepared by Nature's own hand for beauty's self to lie upon—is he to pass on that only among the rough and stony places he may glean his specimens? Is he to have no eye for Nature's living charms in exploring the catacombs of her ancient dead? Must his emotional sensibilities be turned

to stone—fossilized into something as hard as the flints, which he has to break with his hammer to get at the incased fossils? Will it hinder his geologic researches, if he has a keen appreciation of Nature's beauties, whether in her sublime or her softer forms? or, rather, without this will he ever become an enthusiastic geologist? And why should it be otherwise with sacred science? We will own that it also has its rough and rugged paths, where, with little of external beauty to woo the patient searcher, its truths must be explored. But if it has likewise its fair and lovely places, which a correct taste can not fail to be delighted with, are these to be passed by, and truth, because of pleasing form, not to be contemplated? If sometimes, a stern eremite of the rocks, she must be sought in her cell, is she to be shunned when she appears, as with the footsteps of Summer, to beautify her bowers?

II. Our second argument, in enforcing the study of the literature of the Bible, is drawn from the design of revelation itself; for in whatever form a Divine revelation is made, whether in creative acts or inspired utterances, and to whomsoever made, whether to beings innocent or unfallen, or to beings guilty and apostate, its radical idea, or primary design, is to make known God as the All-beautiful—the First Fair as well as the First Good. Plainly this must lie at the basis of all the uses intended by a revelation, since the only preservative

of innocence, and the only restorative from apostasy, is the knowledge of God as the supremely Fair and Good. Accordingly in nature, viewing it as a manifestation of the Creator to his intelligent creatures, we find that the æsthetical has also an ethical use; the sublime and beautiful, in which the visible creation so greatly abounds, when rightly studied, having the effect of increasing our devout admiration of the wisdom, power, and goodness of the Creator. But for this one might say that much needless artistic decoration has been lavished on our planet; since why else should the Creator have mirrored images of such amazing grandeur on the waters of ocean? or why have dipped the desert flowers in hues so exquisitely various? or why have vernaled the crumbling ruin with the green ivy, and taught song-birds to build their nests in its riven crevices? or why have painted those ice-palaces, where arctic Winters sit throned upon eternal snow, with a thousand iridescent auroræ? Why! unless that every-where, by the ascent of the beautiful, his intelligent creatures, susceptible as they are of the emotions of beauty, may rise to juster conceptions of Himself who is the infinitely beautiful?

Such is the ethical value of the æsthetics in nature; and what other than a similar effect can the æsthetics of revelation have if they are rightly studied? A scheme of restorative mercy had to be made known to our fallen race—fallen, be it noted, by their ceasing to believe in God as the supremely

Fair and Good—and, therefore, to be restored only if brought back to that belief. Now, whatever æsthetical attractions could be thrown around the form in which this revelation of mercy has been given, would be auxiliary to its main design. It has been conveyed in human language; or, to speak more definitely, has taken the shape of a book-revelation. Say, then, that besides a grandeur in the thoughts, there is also a gracefulness in the style. One effect of this will be to quicken the emotion of the beautiful, and thus to serve as a contributing help to realize in us a primary end of revolution; namely, to raise our minds to juster conceptions of Him who is the infinitely beautiful, and good, and true. Why, then, should it be thought a thing strange that the Divine Spirit has made use of its literary attractions—or, indeed, of any secondary attractions of which it is capable—as a subsidiary means of commending the Gospel to our acceptance? He, who has strung the human heart with its emotional chords, knew that the message of mercy was the more likely to woo the listening ear if couched in a style which is beautiful. Nor is there any such antagonism between inspiration and the niceties of language, as that the one should obscure the other; on the contrary, each shines more conspicuous by blending their reciprocated lights; just as of old in the Temple of Solomon the rich embroidery on the mystic vail, which dropped before the inmost shrine of Deity, was not hid, but all the better seen to be

of cunning workmanship when, on the great day of atonement, the perlucent shekinah forced its way from within through the transparent tapestry; and the rich tracery, while itself made more visible, did not darken, but rather intensified the lustrous effulgence.

III. The third argument by which we would enforce the study of the literature of the Bible is suggested by the tactics of infidelity. It has been in fashion with our infidel *literati* to present the Bible as a tasteless, inelegant, unliterary book, composed for the most part in a dull, heavy style, its prose parts entirely wanting in rhetorical finish, while its poetry, if occasionally showing lyric fire, is wild and rhapsodical, and its imagery extravagant, even when tried by an Oriental standard. Now, were this the case, then we must have owned that the Bible can not have come from him who is the author of language and sentiment; and it is with no other purpose than to throw discredit on its inspiration as being unworthy of a divine author, that the infidel asserts it to be deficient in literary attractions. Are we, then, to yield up the argument to him? Especially are we to allow him to prejudice ingenuous youth against the Bible, by his unjust representations of its literature, when we have it in our power to invite them to its pages by those very beauties which have a peculiar charm to the young? Are we to hear this celestial garden, with its tree of knowledge, hung with the

fruits and flowers of sacred literature—fair to the eye, and pleasant to the taste, and fenced round by no Divine prohibition—represented as a wilderness to repel the young; and allow the calumny to go forth uncontradicted, when, by our silence, we might be mistaken as consenting to a misrepresentation at once so false and so fraught with danger? Surely not so; but the rather because the infidel would dissuade, it is our duty to invite those of literary tastes and culture to frequent this second Paradise, fair as the first and more secure; for where its fountains sparkled and its groves entwined their floral beauties, there lurked a serpent to beguile; but here no tempter lies in wait—here no death-bearing tree presents its fruit; but life, and truth, and holiness, sanctifying the literature by which they are adorned, are to be found on every branch; while the God of inspiration, whose voice is in its every sound, is always here to meet and converse with his children.

And here I can not refrain from stating it as my conviction, that if the literature of the Bible, as such, is by no means adequately appreciated in this country, this in great measure is owing to the kind of education which obtains in our higher schools and universities. For what is the course of reading through which our students are conducted? It is almost entirely of a heathen complexion. Greek and Latin are the classic languages in our colleges. Homer and Horace, Herodotus and Cæsar—

not Moses or Isaiah—are the text-books. To excel in profane, not sacred literature, is the ambition of our great scholars; and proficiency in the former, even where there is entire ignorance of the latter, is made the passport to wealth and distinction. This, I make free to say, is not as it ought to be; and those who shall succeed in obtaining for the Biblical writings the attention which is due to their literary merits in the training of youth, besides doing a service to the Bible itself, will, by infusing a purer element, have conferred a benefit on the educational institutions of our country. Not that I would see banished from our seats of learning the classics of ancient Greece and Rome; but that I would have oftener to be found along with them the incomparably-higher classic of Palestine. Let Grecian eloquence and Roman song continue to cultivate the minds of our academies; but let it cease to be thought that the orators and poets of Judah are less worthy to be studied.

And here it occurs to me to add another general observation—that out of the literary excellences of the Scriptures no small argument for their divinity might be made. Admit them to be divine writings, and their incomparable literature can of course be easily accounted for. But on the supposition of their being merely human compositions, it is difficult to conceive how the infidel can give an explanation of their literature which will in any way harmonize with the known laws of human thought.

That the Greeks should have constructed so noble a literature will surprise us less, when we consider how singularly endowed by nature that people were to excel both in literary and artistic pursuits. Their poetry, eloquence, music, and sculpture, wonderful as they are, do not go beyond what we would have expected from their natural genius. As for the Romans, they had the Grecian models to work upon, and every scholar knows what free use they made of these. The literary monuments, therefore, which these two nations have erected, while they surprise us by their grandeur, can be accounted for by what we know of the laws of mental development. Indeed, it could scarcely have been otherwise than that the Greek mind should develop itself in such a literature as it actually created, and the Roman mind in such a literature as it formed on its models. This was a necessity of cause and effect. But when we turn to the Hebrews, it seems to us impossible to explain, on natural grounds, how a people so vastly inferior to the Greeks in literary genius should have constructed a literature which not only equals but excels that of the latter; or how a people, not superior to the Romans in literary talent, should have reared some of the noblest parts of their literature at so early an age, when there were no models to be followed. We venture to affirm that the origin and progress of Hebrew literature is a problem which will not admit of a like solution with the literatures of Greece and Rome, or indeed

of any other nation, whether ancient or modern. For we hold this literature to be a singular effect, for which, except on the admission of a divine inspiration, no adequate cause can be assigned.

IV. Our fourth argument in enforcing the study of Biblical literature is that there are plainly to be seen in the Bible innumerable literary beauties. Besides lofty thoughts and noble sentiments, it abounds in felicities of diction, it sparkles with the richest imagery, is replete with picturesque description, and redolent with majestic song; while its singularly-diversified style exhibits the amazing compass and flexibility of which language, as at once the organ and ornament of thought, is capable. Nor needs this surprise us. For seeing that our human conceptions of the beautiful admit of being worked out by means of audible as well as of visible signs, or may be embodied in language not less than in form, in harmony as well as in symmetry, we must necessarily infer that the divine conceptions of the beautiful are also capable of being exhibited in both ways. We see the one in the inimitable statuary and landscape painting in nature, which so conspicuously attest the Divine Artist. And it is no more than we were prepared to expect, that an inimitable eloquence in the Scriptures should attest the Divine Author.

Seeing, then, there are the beauties of language, and the attractions of literature in the Bible, must we pass them by unnoted and unadmired? May

the naturalist, by the use of his microscope, trace the graceful lineations on a shell, or the exquisite venations on the fronds of a fern, so as to reveal to us the infinite art of the great Creator in even these, his lesser works; and must the critic, though he has discovered them by the instrument of *his* science, refrain from pointing out those charming niceties of expression, those exquisite snatches of poetry, that rare picturesqueness of description, that unrivaled style of imagery, the pathos, sublimity, and beauty which, not to speak of its more adorned parts, lie scattered throughout even the plainest portions of the Bible? Surely this may not be, seeing that creation and revelation, each in its own way a perfect exposition of the beautiful, the graceful, and the grand, are alike the productions of the same Author, and have both been produced with the like object of manifesting his perfections.

V. Our fifth and last argument in enforcing the study of Biblical literature is founded upon the desirableness of getting minds of every cast brought into actual contact with the sacred pages. For we should deem it a most beneficial achievement if those of literary tastes and pursuits were got to peruse the Bible, were it even only for the sake of its literature. They would no doubt be doing it an injustice thus to bring it down from its own loftier pedestal; still if they are got to read the Book of God, who shall say that the result might not be that its higher beauties would break in upon them? that,

admiring its literature none the less, they might be awakened to an admiration of its divine excellences. We know that some who approached the Bible with hostile intentions have been disarmed of their hostility by a simple perusal of its contents. And, therefore, we can not but be hopeful, that if those who are not inimical to it could only be lured to a daily study of its lesser beauties, they would erelong be brought to feel that they tread holy ground—that the robe whose embroidery they have been admiring clothes celestial truth—when, lifting their eyes higher than the mantle she wears, they might see her face and be smitten with her heavenly loveliness.

To quote the words of Dr. James Hamilton—"God made the Bible as the guide and oracle of man; but had he meant it as a mere lesson-book of duty, a volume less various and less attractive would have answered every end. A few plain paragraphs announcing God's own character, and his disposition toward us sinners here on earth, mentioning the provision he has made for our future happiness, and indicating the different duties which he would have us perform—a few simple sentences would have sufficed to tell what God is, and what he would have us do. There was no need for the picturesque narrative and the majestic poem—no need for the proverb, the story, and the psalm. A chapter of theology, and another of morals, a short account of the incarnation and the great atonement, and a few

pages of rules and directions for the Christian life, might have contained the practical essence of Scripture, and have supplied us with a Bible of simplest meaning and smallest size. And in that case the Bible would have been consulted only by those rare and wistful spirits to whom the great hereafter is a subject of anxiety, who are really anxious to know what God is, and how themselves may please him.

"But in giving that Bible, its Divine Author had regard to the mind of man. He knew that man has more curiosity than piety, more taste than sanctity, and that more persons are anxious to hear some new, and read some beauteous thing, than to read or hear about God and the great salvation. He knew that few would ever ask, What must I do to be saved? till they came in contact with the Bible itself; and, therefore, he made the Bible not only an instructive book, but an attractive one—not only true but enticing. He filled it with marvelous incident, and engraving history with sunny pictures from Old-World scenery, and affecting anecdotes from the patriarch times. He replenished it with stately argument and thrilling verse, and sprinkled it over with sententious wisdom and proverbial pungency. He made it a book of lofty thoughts and noble images—a book of heavenly doctrine, but withal of earthly adaptation. In preparing a guide to immortality, Infinite Wisdom gave not a dictionary nor a grammar, but a Bible;

a book which, in trying to catch the heart of man, should captivate his taste; and which, in transforming his affections, should also expand his intellect."

CHAPTER II.

THE STYLE OF THE SCRIPTURES.

It is a remark of Addison's, that there is as much difference between comprehending a thought clothed in Cicero's language, and that of an ordinary writer, as between seeing an object by the light of the taper and the light of the sun. Every one feels the justice of this remark; yet it would be difficult exactly to specify what it is that distinguishes the style of Cicero from that of an ordinary writer. The truth being that while the broader features of a style are easy enough to be distinguished; as whether it is a loose or a terse style—laconic or flowing—simple or ornate—vigorous or feeble—lofty or familiar; the various minute particulars of which the style is made up are extremely difficult to describe; yet each of which adds something to the aggregate of qualities which belong to them.

It is with style as with those odors of Nature's own compounding, when having gathered together the aromas of many flowers, she drops them on the breath of winds, which mixes a perfume it is not easy for the chemist's art to analyze. Strictly speaking, style does not include the thoughts; and yet we should err in saying that it is confined to

the mere diction, either in the choice or the arrangement of the words; since it comprehends whatever is characteristic or peculiar in the manner in which a writer presents his ideas. We may not, therefore, separate the language from the thoughts, nor the thoughts from the language, in judging of style. It has indeed been said of words that they are the outward dress or costume of our thoughts; but in accepting this comparison, it ought to be observed, that our words clothe our ideas, not as the loose mantle of cloth drapes the sculptor's model, but rather as the chiseled mantle may be said to clothe the finished statue. The marble bust and its marble cincture can be distinguished the one from the other, but not separated; for the latter adheres to and forms a very part of the sculptured figure; and so it is with the ideas and the words in style.

But while it is thus difficult to analyze the various components in style, our critics and grammarians are tolerably agreed as to what are the principal requisites in a good style. These are, purity, perspicuity, vigor, harmony, dignity, and beauty. Now, when tried by this standard, the styles of the Biblical writers will be found to rank very high. As was to be expected, among some forty different authors, there is considerable diversity and degrees of excellence. For it has pleased the Divine Spirit to employ the natural style of each, so that compared among themselves we can perceive that some

of them were greater masters of language than others. Yet is the difference as among the orbs of the firmament, in which "one star differeth from another star in glory." For, taking them as a whole, and comparing them with the writers of other nations, the sacred penmen form a literary galaxy, than which a brighter does not shine in the firmament of letters.

To justify this high praise which I have challenged for the sacred writers, it does not seem necessary that I should attempt a critical analysis of their respective styles; since this, even were I equal to the task, would only exhibit their merits when compared among themselves. It will be sufficient if I indicate the general excellences which will be found to attach to them all, when we compare them with the writers of other nations. Now there are two conditions which, if an author fulfills, his style merits to be pronounced good. These are: if he fully displays the capabilities and resources of the language in which he writes; and if his style is adapted to the subject of which he treats. The sacred writers have fulfilled both these conditions. For in the first place, no matter what his individual style, each author brings out to a surprising extent the capabilities of the language which he had to employ as the vehicle of his thoughts. Certainly a more favorable exhibition of the Hebrew language could not be desired, than is to be found in the Old Testament. The *literati* of Palestine must have

felt that the language of their nation had ample justice done to it in their sacred books; and how rarely is it that the *theological* works among a people present the most favorable specimen of the language! Then with regard to the Greek of the New Testament, though it was not the vernacular of the writers—and they had not, with perhaps the exception of Paul, studied its classical models—yet it may with truth be affirmed that no pen, not Grecian, had ever written it better, if so well. Even Demosthenes, had he lived to read the pages of the Apostles, must have confessed, notwithstanding the admixture of Hebraisms, and a certain oriental tincture, that the language which he himself has immortalized was not disgraced by the pens of these foreigners. And supposing no other specimens to have come down to us than what the New Testament furnishes, we should still have no mean idea of the amazing compass, the marvelous flexibility, the discriminating precision, and the euphonious cadence of that wonderful language.

Then, in the second place, I observe that the sacred writers have shown an admirable adaptation and fitness in their respective styles to the subjects of which they have severally treated. Thus the style of Moses and Luke, who are, *par excellence*, the sacred historians, is precisely the style we look for in historic composition. The style of David and Isaiah—chief among the sacred poets—is eminently poetical. The style of Solomon, the sacred

aphorist, has exactly the point, terseness, and antithesis which that species of writing requires. The style of Paul, who is confessedly the sacred logician, is just the style for argumentative and expository composition; happily relieved at times by the highest efforts of the rhetorician. The style of Peter singularly fitted him for the epistolary, to which he has confined himself. The same happy adaptation of the style to the subject is observable in all the other sacred writers. The instincts of their literary tastes, or say, rather, these directed by the Spirit of Inspiration, guided them to choose those themes which they were best fitted to adorn. So that this rare eulogium may be passed upon a volume which is the joint production of forty different authors—that there is not a single alteration one could suggest in their division of the literary labor; but one great Presiding Mind—and need I say that it must have been Divine—is seen to have assigned to each exactly that department in the work which he was best fitted to perform. Certainly no other book presents so broad a combination of diverse talents so happily assorted and so harmoniously associated. It is a literary constellation, where every star is in its proper place, and shines with its appropriate luster.

Of what is usually understood by *fine writing*, there is not a great deal to be found in the Bible. But this needs not surprise us; for with men who never wrote for glory or display—who forgot them-

selves in the majesty of their subject—whose aim was not to dazzle or astonish, but to instruct and inform mankind—whose souls never kindled with the desire of posthumous renown, and who had no leisure for literary revision; with such men rhetorical embellishment was incidental rather than designed. But when instances of it occur, they surpass all labored eloquence, in the same degree, and for the same reasons, that the ease of nature surpasses the efforts of art.

Some of Isaiah's lyric outbursts; or Job's magnificent sketches, dashed off with a master's rapid hand; or David's occasional hymns, written with "the pen of a ready writer," yet seemingly too slow for his rushing thoughts; or Paul's extemporaneous orations; or the Savior's own unpremeditated discourses; or the closing apocalyptic images of John, so gorgeous and graphic, but which the seer seems to have copied with hurried touches, as if afraid the vision might dissolve before the transcript was finished—these will serve as examples of the spontaneous eloquence which is to be met with in the Scriptures. It comes upon us like the echoes of the forest, as when a sudden sun-burst incites its winged choristers to mingle their notes; or as when the free winds rush through its rustling boughs. It flashes as a meteor; but not like it to gleam and then go out into darkness.

In calling the eloquence in the Bible spontaneous, I am reminded what years of labor and patient

revision uninspired genius has bestowed upon its choicest productions; and also how much the desire of fame spurred its efforts, while the hope of posthumous renown sustained them. How Demosthenes, for example, composed the most splendid oration in order to win the crown of eloquence—how Isocrates devoted fifteen years to his celebrated panegyric—how Pindar's lyric fire fed itself in the prospect of the great Olympic gatherings—how the Roman lyrist predicts for himself immortal celebrity, the hope of which doubtless had made his fastidious muse so patient in revising his exquisitely-finished odes—how the most superb of modern historians confesses the flutter which he felt when the last line of his task was written, and he thought that perhaps his fame was established—or how even the severe Milton has left on record that he was moved to compose his matchless epics by the hope that he might achieve something which posterity would not willingly let die—or how Scotland's plowman bard, as if smitten with a noble jealousy of other lands which had been immortalized in song, kindled his muse with the hope of making his own Caledonia also a land of the classic muse—

"We 'll gar our streams and burnies shine up wi' the best."

Thus spurred by the hope of posthumous celebrity, and working with patient labor, the orator and the poet have reared some exquisite literary monuments, which we do not hesitate to admire any the

less because it took so much time and patience to rear them. Let it be remembered, then, that at one instantaneous stroke the sacred authors have supplied eloquence, and poetry, and history with some of their most splendid models. In them you find the eloquent orator without Demosthenes' labors—the soul-stirring poet without Pindar's fervor kindled by expected fame—the accurate historian without Gibbon's fastidious elaboration. Oratory, poetry, history, flowed spontaneous from their pens, as the dew-drops of morning fall glittering on the flowers—neither receiving nor requiring the polish of labor or art.

I have remarked that there are considerable diversities of style among the sacred writers, which is owing to the circumstance, also already mentioned, that the Divine Spirit saw meet, instead of one ideal style, to employ the actual styles of the several writers. Inspiration was no mere mechanical process, as when the organist touches the several keys of his instrument, which whatever the melody to be brought out are ever the same, and have no conscious spontaneity in the variation of the notes. But having to use not a dead but living instrument, the spirit so touched each key that it gave forth its own spontaneous and individual sounds; and this, so far from being a blemish imparts one of its most striking beauties to the Bible, and instead of lessening greatly increases its effectiveness as a revelation of Divine thought in human

language. For supposing one ideal style of uniform exactness, and equality, and superexcellence to have been selected, then how monotonous, how mechanical, and how very stiff—how like to a dead instrument and how unlike the living voice—would the sacred writings have been! Whereas instead of this on examining the styles of its some forty different authors, you do not find any two alike; but each is diverse from another, every one of them marked by strong individuality, having all the force and freshness of an original. There is the narrative style of Moses, severely simple even when he descants on creation and chaos; and with touches of the homely, the quaint, and the antique befitting his times. There is the lyric style of David, which through all his moods, and these were often varying, is still, ever in joy or sadness, the music-echoes of the same harp which none other could string or touch as he. There is the sententious, aphoristic style of Solomon; the fervid, bold, and masculine style of Peter, every way so like the man himself; the brilliant, burning style of Isaiah, as if fire-flashes from a truly-poetic soul; the simple love-breathing style of John in his epistles, but rising, as true simplicity and tenderness can rise, into the sublime in his apocalypse; the argumentative, elliptical, parenthetic style of Paul; the truly-dramatic style of Job; the oracular style of Ezekiel; the elegiac style of Jeremiah, whose every word seems to drop tears over a forlorn land. So that, instead

of monotony or mechanicalness, there is all the flexibility, variety, and cadence through which the human voice can rise or fall.

Besides the differences which distinguish the styles of the several writers, there is often great diversity in the style of the same writer, arising from the variety of subjects which he discourses. For, in the same book, we shall sometimes find history, doctrine, prediction, poetry, exhortation, fervid expressions of devotion, gratitude, and holy desire. But with all this diversity in the nature and object of the writings, and in the character and style of the writers, one great and common manner pervades the whole, which may be regarded *as the style of the Scriptures*, since it is peculiar to them, and not to be paralleled by any other writers. Though perhaps not easy to be described, there is certainly a characteristic mark which enables us at once to distinguish the sacred authors. With great diversity of manner and expression they have all of them the features of one family, diverse from any other which literature presents.

There is to be seen, underlying individual differences, the same peculiar stamp, easily perceptible, though perhaps less easy to be described, which marks their productions to be of heavenly origin. This is due, no doubt, in great measure to the unexampled beauty and greatness of the sentiment, which again is to be traced to the grandeur of the themes which in common they discourse. But there

is, besides, an excellence which belongs to the writers themselves, which, though it unites with the sentiment, is yet distinct from it; and it is by this excellence that the writings of the Old and New Testaments are specially characterized.

This excellence, as I have already remarked, is not easy to be described. It is the result of a combination of qualities which a critical analysis can only so far resolve.

Among the qualities which distinguish the inspired penmen in common, not the least striking is the entire absence of those selfish passions and weaknesses which almost always appear in the manner of ordinary writers. The sacred authors are to themselves as nothing, so completely does their subject absorb them. They betray not the least egotism, either open or concealed, having no thought apparently of themselves at all. In one of the pseudo-inspired books, generally known as the Apocrypha, we find the author expressing a hope that if he has written aught amiss the reader will excuse him. Any thing like this, so common with ordinary writers, is not to be found in any of the canonical Scriptures. The idea of literary reputation, or of being thought well of as authors, seems never once to have crossed the minds of the inspired penmen.

Another common quality which distinguishes the sacred writers is their extreme simplicity and artlessness. We see no artificial painting; no desire or

effort to produce effect. Beauty, great and varied, is every-where visible; but it is the unstudied beauty of spontaneous ease. There is a total absence of every tendency to exaggeration—never once any attempt to work up a subject; but, instead, a calmness of tone prevails throughout. Not, however, the calmness of indifference, but that which arises from a sense of the innate majesty of the subjects which they handle. In no other writers will we find an equal reliance on the self-evidential power of purity and truth.

Some have expressed a difficulty to admit the *Theopneustia* of the Scriptures, in consequence of their containing some inelegancies of style. But, we apprehend, this difficulty very much arises from their forming a judgment *a priori* as to what would be the style of an inspired writing, without making due account of the actual circumstances in which it appeared, and the practical uses which it is intended to answer. We are free to own, that, judging *a priori*, and going upon the simple idea of the divinity of the book, we would expect to find its style not only faultless, but altogether superlative. We should not be prepared to find in it occasional inelegancies of expression; nor solecisms in the language; nor sentences which, in point of syntactical construction, would scarcely bear strict criticism; nor passages which, in respect of rhetorical finish, might certainly be improved. We say that an *a priori* judgment would not prepare us to meet with

any thing of this sort in a volume which is inspired. But in the Bible such things are to be met with. Can it, then, be inspired?

In answering this question I shall grant that it was certainly possible to the Divine Spirit, even while using the human vehicle, to have conveyed his ideas in the most pure and perfect phrase that human diction could afford; and, notwithstanding any deficiencies of education in some of the writers, to have worked up each several book and every single passage to the same high level of perfection. This *could* have been done; and thereby the style of the Scriptures in every sentence and vocable have been, in a literary point of view, absolutely perfect. But now, suppose this to have been done, what would have been the result?

In the first place, a primitive Bible, of a date so early as the age of the Hebrew fathers, would have been either impossible or useless. Impossible, if the Divine Spirit was to employ any of the then existent dialects, which were as yet rough, unfixed, and unharmonious. Useless if, anticipating the progress of language, the Divine Spirit had employed a purer and more perfect dialect than any which yet existed, since, in that case it could not have been understood. To furnish a revelation suitable to these early times, it behooved the language to be such as was then in general use. And when one reflects for a moment on the alternative—either no Bible at all till at least the Augustan age of liter-

ature, or a Bible partly composed in one of the early vernacular dialects—there is not surely room to hesitate which was to be preferred.

But now, secondly, will the reader turn aside with us for a moment to examine the æsthetical principles on which another work of God—the natural landscape—has been laid out. Within any given compass—say a forest, or a sea-beach, or a mountain range—individual objects are to be seen which certainly might be more beautiful; but then if these were improved it would be at the expense of the combined effect. In the mountain range, for example, there are jagged inequalities, bare and unshapely masses, contorted excrescences, and riven seams, which viewed alone no one would think of pronouncing beautiful. Yet imagine a polished range of mountains—conceive the Alps or the Andes to be blocked out in exact geometrical curves, with every inequality polished away—tame indeed would be the landscape then; the bald, monotonous preciseness ill compensating for the want of a bold, picturesque irregularity. For though singly not beautiful, at least according to our notions of beauty, yet in combination these contrasted shapes fill up a picture which, taken as an entire piece, is not merely beautiful but sublime.

Such are the æsthetical principles on which the natural landscape is laid out. Now analogy would lead us to expect, and observation, I think, will show, that the Bible, which may be fitly called the

spiritual landscape, has been laid out on the same principles. As in nature there are single objects which, viewed apart, might certainly be more beautiful, so in the Bible there are passages of which the diction might have been more felicitous—sentences which, in point of grammatical construction, might be improved—solecisms which could have been avoided, and periods which might have been more euphoniously balanced. But had these been avoided, by every part being worked up to the same high level of such perfectness as might please the grammarian or the rhetorician, there would have been wanting the picturesqueness of contrast; that harmony which occasional discord only hightens, and that higher beauty, which slight blemishes rather enhance, would have been missed, and in their place we should have had a bald exactness, a tame precision, a polished monotony; and who does not see that the Scriptures, laid out after this fashion, would, in a literary point of view, be quite as tiresome, and full as tame, as, in an artistic point of view, would be a landscape whose rivers are all of equal length, breadth, and current; its valleys all of one foliage and verdure; its mountains all of the same altitude, contour, and stratification?

And how is it that the Great Artist of Nature can thus afford to paint his landscapes so much on the principle of contrast, while the ordinary artist does not risk the same bold treatment? The reason is obvious. The ordinary artist paints on a small

scale, having to fill but a few yards of canvas; whereas the Divine Artist works on a grand scale, his pictures being so vast that what would be blemishes on the bit of canvas serve to harmonize and to enhance the effect of the more beautiful parts, when the eye ranges over miles of landscape. And just so it is that the Author of the Bible, in composing a book so marvelously comprehensive, can admit inequalities, having room and verge enough to harmonize them, which the author of an ordinary book, confined within so much narrower limits, could not with safety introduce; and thus the occasional inelegancies in its style, which to the fastidious critic might seem to be blemishes, and which the mere grammarian might set down as faults, are to us among the proofs of the divinity of the Bible. The author of a lesser book would not have ventured, could not, indeed, have afforded, to admit them; but in God's vast book they highten the general effect; just as in God's vast landscapes the jagged corners of the riven rock, while giving picturesqueness to its contour, cause the wild flowers which creep up or hang over its uneven spiracles to look still more beautiful.

CHAPTER III.

THE FIGURATIVE IN SCRIPTURE.

THE term *figure*, in its ordinary use, signifies the shape or form of any piece of matter which distinguishes it from other pieces. By dropping the idea of mere shape or form, and retaining that of distinction, various secondary meanings have been attached to the term figure. Those persons whom rank in life or political influence distinguish from the bulk of mankind, are said to be men of figure; and we say of men of eminent learning or shining parts, or of the authors of useful discoveries and inventions in arts and sciences, that they will make a figure in their country's history. Precisely on the same principles has this term been appropriated in its application to language. Certain forms of speech, as possessing more mark or distinction than the ordinary form of expressing the same thought, have been called figures. Hence figurative language is opposed to plain, ordinary, or literal speech.

When we say "the parched ground absorbs the rain" we express a familiar fact in common language; but when we say "the thirsty ground drinks in the rain" we convey the same fact in the language of figure. To call youth "the early part of

life" is to speak literally; to call youth "the morning of life" is to express ourselves figuratively. In both the examples given it will be perceived that certain words are used in a different sense from that which they properly signify; being changed, or as we might say, *turned* from their own strict proper meaning to another which has been suggested by the association of ideas. Hence a figure of speech is also called a trope—in Greek τροπος, from τρεπω, to turn—and this change is made for the sake of giving life, beauty, and emphasis to the thought.

Although it has been the business of the grammarians to classify and give names to the various figures of speech, as well as to lay down rules for their proper management, it is not to be supposed that it was the work of the grammarians to invent them. Instead of an artifice of rhetoric, they have their origin in human nature itself; and, accordingly, were in use long before rhetoric, or grammar, or criticism, had been heard of.

I have said that it is the business of the grammarian or critic to classify the figures of speech; but their attempts toward a simple and exact classification have been attended only with partial success; for when tropes are divided into figures of language and figures of thought, a basis of classification is assumed which is itself shifting; since language and thought often so run into each other, that it were impossible to say by which of them more than the other the effect is produced. A bet-

ter division is into figures of the imagination and figures of the passions; although here, also, the basis of classification will be found to be a variable line; for although in themselves distinct, when are the imagination and the passions in their hightened workings ever entirely separate?

Fortunately it is not necessary that I should classify the figures of speech, my task merely requiring me to show that the principal ones, at least, are to be found in the Bible, and that when any one of these is introduced, this is done with propriety, both as respects the treatment of the figure itself, and the elucidation or enrichment of the thought which is figuratively expressed.

Did I deem it deserving the necessary space on these pages, it would be easy to show that there is not any considerable figure or trope recognized by the grammarians, of which examples may not be selected from the sacred writings. We shall find in them the comparison, the metaphor, the allegory, the hyperbole, the interrogation, the antithesis, the climax, the ellipsis, the prosopopœia or personification, the apostrophe; as also pleonasm, exclamation, inversion, metonymy, prolepsis, vision, catachresis, synecdoche, irony, antonomasy. But I do not see that it would serve a material purpose to give a mere string of specimens of this long catalogue of figures. A preferable course seems to be to make a selection, thus leaving sufficient space for some remarks on the nature of the figures themselves, and

also on the skill which the sacred writers so notably exhibited in the management of the figures. For this purpose I shall select the comparison—on which, as being the most frequent, I shall somewhat enlarge—the metaphor, the allegory, the climax, the hyperbole, the prosopopœia or personification, and the apostrophe.

COMPARISON.

Every object which makes any considerable impression on the mind is constantly accompanied by certain circumstances and relations, which strike us at the same time; so that an object seldom, if indeed ever, presents itself to our view, except as related to other objects—as going before them or following them—as their cause or their effect—as resembling them or opposed to them. By this means any idea which a single object suggests may be said to carry in its train a group of other ideas, drawn after it by the force of association. And it may so happen that these attendant or associated ideas strike the imagination more forcibly than the principal idea itself. They are perhaps more agreeable; or they are more familiar; or they recall to our memory a greater variety of important circumstances. This propension in the human mind to compare and contrast objects arises from an original law in its constitution, and is called into constant exercise by the system of nature, which is that of unity in variety; it being rare indeed, if in the midst of numerous re-

semblances we do not discover some diversity, and among manifold diversities some resemblance. Thus does nature at once delight and instruct us, by furnishing ample materials on which we can exercise our faculty of comparison. And if a writer expects to impart pleasure and instruction to his readers, he must imitate nature—that is, he must make free use of similitudes.

How agreeably a judicious use of comparisons assists an author, in giving both brilliance and perspicuity to his pages, is easy to be seen. Suppose he wishes to embellish an object, instead of presenting it nakedly by itself, he will do better to compare it to some other object which is known to be beautiful, when the imagination will at once transfer the impression of beauty from the subsidiary to the primary object. Or suppose his design is to illustrate or throw light upon an object which is more or less obscure; if he compare it with another object which is familiar, the imagination at once transfers the impression of perspicuity from the subsidiary to the principal object. Or suppose his desire is to amplify an object; in this case, instead of laboring to expand it, he will often accomplish his purpose at a single stroke by comparing it with another object whose magnitude is already known. Or suppose he wishes to rivet an object on the memory; by using a comparison he may succeed in fixing it, so to speak, by two bolts instead of one. Thus it will appear how greatly similes assist to embellish, to illustrate,

to amplify and fix our ideas; and therefore to impart beauty, perspicuity, grandeur, and force to the language in which we clothe them.

Of Biblical comparisons it were almost useless to give examples; for they are so very numerous as to be found almost on every page. Not more thickly are the flowers, and leaves, and grass-blades at early morn beaded with dew-drops, than are the sacred writings adorned with these beauties of figurative language. Nor are the Bible comparisons less various than they are numerous, being drawn from every conceivable source, and ranging from objects the very simplest to the most sublime. In truth, there is no department of universal nature which has not been laid under tribute to enrich the collection. The lofty movements of the heavenly bodies; the stately march of the seasons, and the rapid succession of day and night; the mighty ocean of waters, and the minute dew-drops; the pastoral landscape browsed by peaceful flocks, and the arid wilderness with its roving herds and nomadic hordes; the cloud-capt mountains and the lowly vales; the tempest and the calm; every variety of the vegetable tribes; the treasures of the mines; the sunshine, the rains, the winds, and the fleecy clouds; the elements and the elemental phenomena; the habits and instincts of animals, both wild and domestic; agriculture; the arts and handicraft occupations; the battle-field and the tented camp; the most familiar pictures of domestic life; the palaces

of warrior kings, and the tents of shepherd sires; in a word, from the heavens above, and from the earth below, and from the waters under the earth, the sacred penmen have drawn their comparisons.

Nor is it only from the objects in nature the inspired writers have drawn their comparisons. The incidents of sacred history have also enabled them to enrich their imagery with figures of amazing grandeur. For the order of topics which commonly furnish them are of a high caste; such as the chaos and creation; the deluge; the destruction of Sodom; the Exodus of the Israelites from Egypt, and their pilgrimage through the desert; the descent of God upon Mount Sinai, at the promulgation of the law. Though from us the distance of time and place has removed these events into the dimness of a remote antiquity, so as of necessity to render them less interesting than they were to the Hebrews, whose epoch all but touched the oldest of them, and with whose own history others of them were actually interwoven; yet we can not fail to perceive the force, the sublimity, and splendor of these historical similitudes. Then also the peculiar ritualism of the Hebrews, in itself so imposing and picturesque, has supplied another rich source of comparison. One example, as being exceedingly fine, may be here cited: "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment on the head, that ran down

upon the beard, even Aaron's beard, that went down to the skirts of his garments." Ps. cxxxiii. Then also the geographical aspects of Palestine, which are of a kind so peculiar and impressive, suggested manifold local comparisons, which have a strikingly-picturesque effect. There is a liveliness in these topographical similes which does not fail to convey a hightened pleasure, though we who read them may never have seen the localities which are referred to.

It has been urged as an objection against some of the comparisons in the Scriptures, that they are strained and far-fetched, being founded on slight and distant resemblances. This objection, we venture to say, is without foundation as respects the later sacred books. In those of an earlier date there may occasionally occur a comparison which, to modern taste, will seem to be carried beyond moderation. But in this respect the Scriptures only follow a universal law of mental development; for when a nation emerged out of barbarism begins to think of the fine arts, and of the æsthetical in nature, the beauties of language can not long lie concealed; and when discovered they are generally, by the force of novelty, carried to excess. The imagination for a time riots, as it were, in a new region of pleasing ideas. Hence in the early poetry of every nation we find metaphors and similes founded on what appear to us slight and distant resemblances; but which, ere they had lost their

novelty, would appear to be quite natural and apposite.

Perhaps of all the sacred books the Song of Solomon is the one against which the objection of extravagant similes might be brought with the most show of reason; but with regard to this remarkable composition, besides the explanation already offered, it ought to be kept in view that without a certain air of extravagance it could not be what it professes—a song of love. I venture to say that when the effect of this passion on the imagination is allowed for, the comparisons employed by Solomon will be acknowledged to be in strictest accordance with human nature. The reader may turn for a specimen to the fourth chapter, verses one to five. Were this a mere description of female beauty from the poet's pen, I know not how I could defend it from the charge of extravagance. But it is not as a poet merely, but likewise as a lover, that Solomon here describes the object of his affection; giving free utterance, as lovers will do, to those fervid images of the imagination, which the passion of the lover never fails to kindle. Making allowance for a certain Oriental tincture in his imagery, the poet will be found throughout this divine song to have exhibited with consummate skill the workings of the universal passion; and thus to have laid a correct foundation in the natural for that spiritual love which it is his object to celebrate.

It has also been objected to the Bible comparisons, that many of them are so homely and familiar; but, for our own part, we take this to be one of their chief merits. For when the object of a writer is not so much elegance as lucidity, when he seeks rather to illustrate and make plain than to aggrandize and ornament his subject, the more familiar his similes are the better. Now, the design of the sacred writers being to simplify truth for the masses, they have shown admirable judgment in using plentifully this class of illustrations; and yet, though the objects employed by them are thus necessarily of a very homely kind, such as, in less skillful hands, might impart an appearance of lowness and vulgarity to the subjects illustrated, we do not find this to be the case. For even when their comparisons are taken from the most insignificant objects, the sacred writers still sustain the full dignity of their themes. I shall show this by giving a few examples. One could scarcely seek out a more homely or trivial object than a barn or a thrashing-floor. Yet how forcibly and dignified are the following similes: "Behold, I will make thee a new sharp thrashing instrument having teeth; thou shalt thrash the mountains, and beat them small, and shall make the hills as chaff; thou shalt fan them, and the wind shall carry them away, and the whirlwind shall scatter them." Is. xli, 15, 16. "Make their nobles like Oreb and like Zeeb; yea, all their princes like Zebah, and as Zalmunna: O my God,

make them like a wheel; as the stubble before the wind." Ps. lxxxiii, 11, 13. Again, what could be a less poetical scene, bordering as it does on the ludicrous, than a company of fig gatherers shaking the loaded branches, and as a feat of dexterity catching in their mouths some of the figs as they fall? yet out of this scene the prophet Nahum in predicting the doom of Nineveh works a highly-poetic simile: "All thy strongholds shall be like fig-trees with the first ripe figs; if they be shaken they shall even fall into the mouth of the eater." Nah. iii, 12. Or, again, the common-place idea of a few school-boys gone out a bird-nesting supplies Isaiah with a comparison of great energy, which he puts into the mouth of the Assyrian conqueror boasting his victories: "And my hand hath found as a nest the riches of the people; and as one gathereth eggs that are left, have I gathered all the earth; and there was none that moved the wing, or opened the mouth, or peeped." Is. x, 14. Again, how homely an object is the mother-hen shielding her frightened brood under her wings on the approach of danger; yet how pathetic, even sublime a comparison has this furnished to the Savior: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings and ye would not!" Matt. xxiii, 37. Or, again, what more homely object could one

look on than a handful of brushwood set to blaze under a pot? yet how forcibly is this made to represent the vanity and evanescence of boisterous mirth: "As the cracking of thorns under a pot, so is the laughter of the fool!" Eccl. vii, 6. Or, to give one other example, it is even a repulsive object when a sow bemires itself in its own litter, or a dog laps its own vomit; yet how skillfully is the very repulsiveness of those objects made to set forth the sin of the apostate: "It has happened unto him according to the true proverb: the dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire." 2 Pet. ii, 22.

Nor are the sacred writers singular in their use of homely objects to illustrate subjects of a lofty cast. The same thing has been done by the great epic poets, both ancient and modern. Thus Homer compares the Grecians crowding to the council from their ships and tents to a swarm of bees among the vernal flowers. Virgil employs the same comparison to set forth the innumerable nations and people which crowded the shores of Lethe. Milton likewise has used the same comparison to represent the gathering of the fallen angels to Pandemonium. Homer has ventured on a still more homely simile, where he compares the numbers of the Grecian army, their ardor and eagerness for battle, to swarms of flies buzzing round a milk-pail. Nor have the critics pretended that, by such comparisons, these great

masters of simile have in the least degraded the dignity of the Epic muse.

Seeing that so many of the Biblical similitudes are taken from natural scenery and familiar life, in order to perceive their point and propriety the reader must have made himself acquainted with the social habits and domestic manners in the East, as also with the physical aspects of Palestine. It does not surprise us that certain infidels have ridiculed some of the Bible comparisons as obscure, pointless, and out of proportion, when they show themselves to be so insufficiently informed on the subjects mentioned. A little less ignorance would have caused them to spare their ridicule.

I may not close these brief remarks on the comparisons of the Bible without observing how keen an insight the sacred writers must have had into those analogues which subsist between the processes in the natural and the spiritual worlds; and how finely they have illustrated the great fact, that the invisible is adumbrated or symbolized in the visible; and that Nature is God's great parable. Doubtless their peculiar religious training practiced them in this rare art of deciphering symbolical resemblances; for their entire ritual was itself a matchless symbolism—their typology was a system of pictorial analogies or parallels addressed to the eye—their history and their chief historical personages were typical. And well did they profit by their training; for there is scarce any natural process of which

they have not given the spiritual correspondent or analogue. The alternation of day and night—the succession of the seasons and the seasonal phenomena of the year—the action of the elements—the formation of hail and snow, and the deposition of dew—the processes of vegetation—the functions of animal life—the fluxes of the ocean—the aspects of the heavens: have all been translated into their spiritual forms and significations. One is reminded of Swedenborg's doctrine of representations and correspondences. But on comparing the symbolism of these "holy men of old" with the symbolism of the modern mystic, how striking is the contrast! In them all is sobriety, decorum, and intelligibility; the material universe is not sublimed away, nor is the spiritual materialized. But he is ever extravagant, fanciful, and grotesque—darkening truth by the very excess of his symbolic light—professing to have perceived higher meanings, where evidently he had failed to perceive the lower, and covering the face of Nature with his riddle-writing till it looks like some Egyptian obelisk, one mass of hieroglyphs.

CHAPTER IV.

THE FIGURATIVE IN SCRIPTURE—CONTINUED.

METAPHOR.

THE metaphor differs from the comparison simply in this respect: that while, in the latter, certain words or signs are used to denote that a similitude is intended, as when we say the soldiers fought *like* lions, in the former the sign or formula of comparison is dropped, and instead of one thing being resembled to another, the aid of the imagination is carried a degree further, one thing being figured or feigned to be another, as when we say the soldiers were lions in combat. The metaphor, therefore, is an abbreviated and also a bolder form of the comparison.

This figure is frequently used by the Scriptural writers; and while many of the examples are exceedingly bold and imaginative, they are introduced in the most natural manner, and on the most suitable occasions. The following may suffice as specimens: "Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well." Gen. xlix, 22. "The Lord is a man of war." Exod. xv, 3. "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want." Ps. xxiii, 1. "For the Lord God is a sun and shield." Ps. lxxxiv, 11. "I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the val-

leys." Cant. ii, 1. "And he said unto them, Go ye and tell that fox." Luke xiii, 32. "And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave it unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you." Luke xxii, 19–20. "I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away; and every branch that beareth fruit he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. I am the vine, ye are the branches; he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit. John xv, 1, 2, 5. "And did all drink the same spiritual drink; for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them; and that Rock was Christ." 1 Cor. x, 4.

ALLEGORY.

By some of the grammarians the allegory has been regarded as a continued metaphor; but others, we think more correctly, consider them to be not only distinct, but different figures. In the metaphor, as we have seen, there is a fiction of the imagination, by which one thing is feigned to be another; in the allegory there is not this fiction, but a subject is chosen having properties or circumstances resembling those of the principal subject, and is described in such a manner as to represent it. There is this other difference in the metaphor,

the principal object is first mentioned before the subsidiary object is introduced; and the transition of thought is thus from the former to the latter. In the allegory the process is reversed; for while the subsidiary or representative object is described in terms suitable to its nature, the subject which it is meant to represent is kept out of view, and we are left to discover it by reflection. In the metaphor the writer points out the resemblance; in the allegory the reader is left to discover the resemblance for himself, and by means of it the object intended.

The allegory affords ample scope to the descriptive as well as the imaginative powers of a writer; being, in fact, the most pictorial of all the figures. It has been likened to a hieroglyphic painting, excepting only that words are used instead of colors. Or we might call it a type or emblem, by means of vocal in place of visible symbols.

Of the allegory a fine example is to be found in the 80th Psalm: "Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt; thou hast cast out the heathen, and planted it. Thou preparedst room before it, and didst cause it to take deep root, and it filled the land. The hills were covered with the shadow of it, and the boughs thereof were like the goodly cedars. She sent out her boughs unto the sea, and her branches unto the river. Why hast thou then broken down her hedges, so that all they which pass by the way do pluck her? The boar out of

the wood doth waste it, and the wild beast of the field doth devour it. Return, we beseech thee, O God of hosts: look down from heaven, and behold, and visit this vine; and the vineyard which thy right hand hath planted, and the branch that thou madest strong for thyself. It is burnt with fire; it is cut down: they perish at the rebuke of thy countenance!" Ver. 8–16.

Here God's chosen people are represented by a vineyard; and the figure is sustained throughout with great correctness. There are no mixed metaphors; not a single circumstance is introduced that does not strictly agree to a vine; and the subsidiary subject exactly represents the state of the Jewish Church, which is the principal subject. The amplification of the representative object from a single vine into a vineyard is a happy stroke, equally true to the natural history of the plant, and correct as an illustration of the social progress of Israel.

Another fine example of the allegory occurs in the 5th chapter of Isaiah: "Now will I sing to my well-beloved a song of my beloved touching his vineyard. My well-beloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill: and he fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also made a wine-press therein: and he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes. And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah, judge, I pray you,

betwixt me and my vineyard. What could have been done more to my vineyard that I have not done in it; wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes? And now go to; I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard: I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up; and break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down: and I will lay it waste: it shall not be pruned nor digged; but there shall come up briers and thorns: I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it. For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant: and he looked for judgment, and behold oppression; for righteousness, and behold a cry." Ver. 1–7. Another example, perhaps even finer, occurs in the 12th chapter of Ecclesiastes: "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them: while the sun, or the light, or the moon, or the stars, be not darkened, nor the clouds return after the rain: in the day when the keepers of the house shall tremble, and the strong men shall bow themselves, and the grinders cease, because they are few, and those that look out of the windows be darkened; and the doors shall be shut in the streets when the sound of the grinding is low; and he shall rise up at the voice of the bird; and all the daughters of music shall be brought low: also when they shall be afraid of

that which is high, and fears shall be in the way, and the almond-tree shall flourish, and the grasshopper shall be a burden, and desire shall fail; because man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets: or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern: then shall the dust return to the earth as it was; and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it." Ver. 1–7.

The allegory often assumes the form of a continued narrative, into which may be introduced living beings, in any variety of circumstance, according to the fancy and design of the writer. Of this kind of allegory we have some fine examples in our own language—the *Fairy Queen* of Spenser, in poetry; Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, and the *Vision of Mirza*, by Addison, in prose. Among the poetical books of Scripture the Song of Solomon is a splendid specimen of this sort of allegorical composition, throughout which, in the form of an epithalamium, or nuptial poem, the love between Christ and his Church is beautifully allegorized.

As being of a kindred nature, we may fitly consider the parable in connection with the allegory. Waving certain subsidiary meanings which the term occasionally has in Scripture, a parable may be defined, a narrative, either fictitious or real, under which is vailed some important truth; the object of the writer being to convey his meaning in a less

offensive or more engaging form than that of direct assertion. The parable may be considered as composed of two parts—the *protasis*, which conveys merely the literal sense, and the *apodosis*, which contains the mystical or figurative sense. It is not necessary, however, that this second part should be always expressed, but may be left to be inferred. In his parables the Savior frequently omits it.

"The excellence of a parable depends on the propriety and force of the comparison on which it is founded, or the general fitness and harmony of its parts; on the obviousness of its main scope or design; on the beauty and conciseness of the style in which it is expressed; and on its adaptation to the circumstances and capacities of the hearers. If the illustration is drawn from an object obscure, it will throw no light on the point to be illustrated. If the resemblance is forced and inobvious, the mind is perplexed and disappointed in seeking for it." We remember having been much struck by an exquisite piece of art in sculpture, which was called "the Vailed Vestal." Seen at a distance, the head appeared as if wrapped in a thick mass of folded marble; but, on a nearer inspection, so exquisite was the chiseling, that under the solid marble every lineament of the face could be distinctly traced; and in our memory that virgin countenance dwells more vividly than if we had seen it without its vail of solid stone, which we wondered how the sculptor's art could render so entirely transparent. So

is it with a parable, when properly constructed. Looked at from a distance, so to say, what the reader perceives is merely the outward narrative or story, but on a nearer inspection, beneath this, as through the marble transparency which vailed without concealing the vestal's countenance, he discovers the spiritual truth, which is all the more striking, and likely to dwell longer in the memory, because he has had to seek for it under the parabolic style.

In the Old Testament there are instances of the parable which are not wanting in any excellence belonging to this species of composition. What can be more forcible, more apposite, more persuasive, and more beautiful than Jotham's "Parable of the Trees?" Judges ix, 7–15; or Nathan's "Parable of the Ewe Lamb?" 2 Sam. xii, 1–14; or Jehoash's "Parable of the Thistle and the Cedar?" 2 Kings xiv, 9–10; or Ezekiel's "Parable of the Lioness and her Whelps?" Ezek. xix, 1–9.

But the parables uttered by our Savior claim preeminence over all others on account of their number, variety, appositeness, simplicity, force, and beauty. Infidelity itself has owned its admiration of them; nor will the most ardent admirer of classic or Oriental literature, rich as the latter is in parabolic, hesitate to admit that incomparably superior to any thing they furnish are the parables of our Lord. Like the nymph of the fountain beholding her own lovely limbs in their simple attire

reflected in the liquid mirror, does heavenly truth behold herself reflected in these exquisite parables.

CLIMAX.

When a writer becomes full of his subject, it will appear to magnify itself, and increase in interest as he proceeds in his statement and argument. New ideas rapidly present themselves to his excited imagination, which, unless selected and arranged with judgment, would have the effect of over-crowding his subject, till, as is the case with a mountain which is partially concealed by the clouds itself has attracted, it would be seen shorn of its dimensions. But it is the writer's design to amplify his subject; therefore, instead of promiscuously crowding, he marshals his ideas in line, so as that they shall rise in succession above one another, bearing with accumulated force and with a magnifying effect upon the one great object. This sort of arrangement is called climax, and is always considered as a beauty in composition. Its effect is to communicate to his readers a measure of the writer's own ardor, and of his elevation of soul in view of his subject—expectation is raised, hope is stimulated, we are disposed to follow him in the ascent, and provided it is by natural gradations he leads us on, instead of any feeling of distrust or weariness, we rather yield to a pleasing impatience to be conducted to the uppermost summit, which, having reached, the successive hights by which the imagination has mounted, pro-

duce very much the same emotion as when, standing on the highest point in some Alpine range, one looks down upon the mountainous steps he had to climb to get to it.

Examples of the climax, some of which are of great force, are frequent in the Scriptures. I shall cite a few.

"But where shall wisdom be found? and where is the place of understanding?

Man knoweth not the price thereof; neither is it found in the land of the living.

The depth saith, It is not in me; and the sea saith, It is not with me.

It can not be gotten for gold, neither shall silver be weighed for the price thereof.

It can not be valued with the gold of Ophir, with the precious onyx, or the sapphire.

The gold and the crystal can not equal it; and the exchange of it shall not be for jewels or fine gold.

No mention shall be made of coral, or of pearls; for the price of wisdom is above rubies.

The topaz of Ethiopia shall not equal it, neither shall it be valued with pure gold.

Whence then cometh wisdom? and where is the place of understanding?

Seeing it is hid from the eyes of all living, and kept close from the fowls of the air.

Destruction and death say, We have heard the fame thereof with our ears.

God understandeth the way thereof, and he knoweth the place thereof." Job xxviii, 12–23.

"Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?

If I ascend up into heaven thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there.

If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea;

Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.

If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me.

Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee.

For thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother's womb." Ps. cxxxix, 7–13.

"The hand of the Lord was upon me, and carried me out in the Spirit of the Lord, and set me down in the midst of the valley which was full of bones,

And caused me to pass by them round about: and behold, there were very many in the open valley; and lo, they were very dry.

And he said unto me, Son of man, can these bones live? And I answered, O Lord God, thou knowest.

Again he said unto me, Prophesy upon these bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord.

Thus saith the Lord God unto these bones, Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live:

And I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and ye shall live; and ye shall know that I am the Lord.

So I prophesied as I was commanded: and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and behold a shaking and the bones came together, bone to his bone.

And when I beheld, lo, the sinews and the flesh came up upon them, and the skin covered them above: but there was no breath in them.

Then said he unto me, Prophesy unto the wind, prophesy, son of man, and say to the wind, Thus saith the Lord God; Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.

So I prophesied, as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army." Ezek. xxxvii, 1–10.

"That which the palmer-worm hath left hath the locust eaten; and that which the locust hath left hath the canker-worm eaten; and that which the canker-worm hath left hath the caterpillar eaten." Joel i, 4.

"And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience;

And patience, experience; and experience, hope:

And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us." Rom. v, 3–5.

"For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,

Nor hight, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Rom. viii, 38–39.

"And besides this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue, knowledge;

And to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness;

And to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity." 2 Pet. i, 5–7.

HYPERBOLE.

The hyperbole is a figure of exaggeration. It consists in magnifying or diminishing an object beyond its natural dimensions. The tendency to do this must be natural to man, since in all languages, even in common conversation, hyperbolical expressions very frequently occur. When the imagination is favorably affected by its present object, and, as it were, is challenged by some other object possessing a similar property in a higher degree, unwilling to confess the former to be inferior, it boldly asserts its equality. Thus, if the fleetness of a racer is the object which has preoccupied the

imagination, his speed is as swift as the wind; if some object which is white, say a bridal robe, its whiteness equals that of snow; if a lofty mountain, it pierces the heavens; if a numerous host, it is as multitudinous as the stars in the firmament, or the sand upon the sea-shore; if the sheen of buckler and spear, it dazzles us as if the lightning's flash.

The tendency to hyperbolize is greater in youth than in maturer years, when experience has taught us to take a juster measure of things, and when the imagination has cooled to a lower heat. From the same cause the earlier literatures abound most in hyperbole. So, also, according as the imagination of a people is more or less lively, will their language be characterized by this figure. Hence the literature of the Orientals, who are ardently imaginative, is far more hyperbolic than that of the Europeans, who, under a less torrid sky, are more phlegmatic.

From its nature the hyperbole scarce admits of bounds or limitation. It will not be fenced in by formal rules or prescriptions. Its line of motion, so to speak, is not the circle, but its tangent; but for this very reason it is the more imperative that the subject hyperbolized is such as will sustain the exaggeration. What is really great will bear to be represented as still greater; and what is lofty, as still more lofty; what is long-during, as everlasting; and what is so ancient that the oldest history has failed to trace its beginnings, as eternal. But no conceiv-

able circumstances could reconcile us to a trifling object being equaled with one that is great, or a small object with one that is immense. It were mere burlesque or caricature to magnify a mole-hill into a mountain; or an ephemera into an immortal; or a lock of hair into a comet's tail. To be represented as immense, an object must at least be large; or an assemblage to be set forth as innumerable, must be literally a multitude. An attempt to magnify minuteness, or to aggrandize meanness, or to elevate what is low, would be resented as an extravagance or a deception.

Though examples of hyperbole are not wanting in the Scriptures, it occurs less frequently than one might expect, considering how partial the Oriental writers are to this figure. The native majesty of their themes, their strong truthfulness, and the sobriety of thought by which a pure devotion never fails to check the imagination and moderate the passions, will account for the comparative infrequency with which the sacred writers employ a figure which deals in exaggeration.

The following specimens are worthy to be cited as extremely bold, without, however, being in the least extravagant:

"And they said, Go to, let us build us a city, and a tower whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth." Gen. xi, 4.

"And I will make thy seed as the dust of the

earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered." Gen. xiii, 16.

"And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them. And he said unto him, So shall thy seed be." Gen. xv, 5.

"The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and shall be removed like a cottage; and the transgression thereof shall be heavy upon it; and it shall fall, and not rise again." Is. xiv, 20.

"I beheld the earth, and lo, it was without form and void; and the heavens, and they had no light.

I beheld the mountains, and lo, they trembled, and all the hills moved lightly.

I beheld, and lo, there was no man, and all the birds of the heavens were fled.

I beheld, and lo, the fruitful place was a wilderness, and all the cities thereof were broken down, at the presence of the Lord, and by his fierce anger." Jer. iv, 23–26.

"And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." Matt. xix, 24.

"And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen." John xxi, 25.

PERSONIFICATION.

The human mind, constitutionally social, must needs desire society; and, along with society, it craves for sympathy. When the plaintive passion becomes excessive, if it can not be gratified in a natural way, it will convert even inanimate objects into sympathizing beings. If I follow the solitary to his hermit haunts I shall find that, although he has fled the society of his fellow-men, he can not do without associates; for, rather than be companionless, he will tame the fawns of the wood to keep him company, till they have learned to feed out of his hand, and follow him on his lonely paths. He will address them, as the mood happens to be upon him, in bitter invective or doleful lament; as if they could share in his hate of his human kind, and participate in his sorrows. Nay, more; could I watch him in his sadder moments, I should probably hear him pouring forth his sorrows to the midnight stars, or making his plaint to the trees of the wood, as they droop their dewy branches in the midnight air. Nor is the solitary altogether singular in this. For, when under any strong emotion, whether it be of a joyous or a sad kind, if no living ear is nigh tc listen to us, we yield to an impulse of our social nature, and address the inanimate objects around us as if endowed with human sympathies. It is in this instinct of our social emotions that the figure we are now considering has its origin. For in personification, or, as it is more technically called, pro-

sopopœia, we bestow sensibility and voluntary motion on things inanimate, and ascribe rational intellect and moral feelings to the lower animals. This unquestionably is a bold figure; yet, such is the effect of the passions to incline us toward it, that, provided it is naturally introduced, we acquit a writer of any charge of extravagance who employs it.

There is a temperate heat of the passions, which is little more than a glow of the fancy, when what might seem a mild form of personification is used even in ordinary discourse—as when we speak of the *thirsty* ground, a *furious* dart, the *angry* ocean, the *melancholy* groves, the *listening* air. But this will be more properly considered as simple metaphor; since such epithets do not produce even a momentary conviction that the ground, the dart, the ocean, the groves, the air, are endued with personal attributes. But when the heat of the passions goes beyond a glow of the fancy, the imagination would seem to sympathize with the sincerity and truthfulness of our emotions; and instead of sporting in fancied conceits, is impressed with the belief—which is of course only temporary—that the inanimate objects which it addresses are actually endowed with the attributes of sensible beings.

There would seem to be just two degrees of this figure. The first, or lower degree, when we introduce inanimate objects as feeling and acting like those that have life; and the second, or higher degree, when inanimate objects are introduced not

only as feeling and acting, but as speaking to us or hearing and listening to us when we address ourselves to them.

In the sacred Scriptures personification in both its degrees is frequently used; and the equal of some of the instances will not be found in any literature. Indeed, it is this figure which, beyond all others, elevates the style of Scripture; for no personifications employed by any poets are so magnificent and striking as those of the inspired writers. That noted passage in the book of Isaiah, which describes the fall of the king of Assyria, is full of personified objects:

"That thou shalt take up this proverb against the king of Babylon, and say, How hath the oppressor ceased! the golden city ceased!

The Lord hath broken the staff of the wicked, and the scepter of the rulers.

He who smote the people in wrath with a continual stroke, he that ruled the nations in anger, is persecuted, and none hindereth.

The whole earth is at rest, and is quiet: they break forth into singing.

Yea, the fir-trees rejoice at thee, and the cedars of Lebanon, saying, Since thou art laid down, no feller is come up against us.

Hell from beneath is moved for thee to meet thee at thy coming: it stirreth up the dead for thee, even all the chief ones of the earth: it hath raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations.

All they shall speak and say unto thee, Art thou also become weak as we? art thou become like unto us?

Thy pomp is brought down to the grave, and the noise of thy viols: the worm is spread under thee, and the worms cover thee.

How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!" Is. xiv, 4–12.

What a succession of bold poetic strokes we have here; the fir-trees and cedars of Lebanon breaking forth into exultation over the fall of the tyrant; as if their bleeding trunks had felt the blow of his battle-ax, when it smote down the warriors of Judah! Hell from beneath moved up to meet him—and the dead kings introduced as commiserating with mock pity the fall of one whose magnificence and victories had eclipsed their own! That also is a bold personification in the book of Job, where inquiry being made about the place of wisdom, the deep is introduced as answering, "It is not in me," and the sea as replying, "It is not with me." How animated a picture the Psalmist raises when, not content to strike his harp alone, he summons to the choir, to join with him in his anthem, every thing that lives, or moves, or has a being! "Praise the Lord from the earth, ye dragons, and all deeps: fire and hail; snow and vapor; stormy wind fulfilling his word: mountains and all hills; fruitful trees, and all ce-

dars: beasts, and all cattle; creeping things, and flying fowl: kings of the earth, and all people; princes and all judges of the earth: both young men and maidens; old men and children: let them praise the name of the Lord; for his name alone is excellent; his glory is above the earth and heaven." When any appearance or operation of the Almighty is concerned, the sacred writers are so filled with animated views of his majesty and power, that they represent all nature as if touched with a like animation—the pulses of life throbbing as if one great heart beat throughout creation. Take the following as an example of this: "Before him went the pestilence: the waters saw thee, O God, and were afraid; the mountains saw thee, and trembled. The overflowing of the water passed by; the deep uttered his voice, and lifted up his hands on high." What a sublime stroke, whose parallel, I venture to say, will not be found in the entire compass of classic poetry, where it is said of Christ that, looking upon the tempestuous sea on rising from sleep, "He rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm!" To speak to the raging tempest—its rushing winds and its crusted waves—with the word of authority, as though Nature in her wildest moods could not fail to recognize the voice of her Lord; could a sublimer personification be conceived! As an example of this figure, where simplicity is combined with great beauty, the following may be cited: "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the

firmament sheweth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard." Ps. xix. Addison has paraphrased this thought, with his usual felicity of diction, in his celebrated hymn, which first appeared in No. 465 of the *Spectator*. Nothing can be conceived more beautiful and sublime than the personification of wisdom which Solomon so frequently introduces. As for example, Prov. viii, 27–31: "When he prepared the heavens I was present; when he described a circle on the face of the deep: when he disposed the atmosphere above; when he established the fountains of the deep: when he published his decree to the sea, that the waters should not pass their bounds: when he planned the foundations of the earth: then was I by him as his offspring; and I was daily his delight; I rejoiced continually before him; I rejoiced in the habitable part of his earth, and my delights were with the sons of men." Not less admirable is the Psalmist's personification of the Divine attributes: "Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other." Where shall we find a bolder use of this figure, than where the prophet Habakkuk represents the pestilence as marching before Jehovah when he comes to vengeance, iii, 5; or where Job introduces death and destruction affirming of wisdom that her fame only had come to their ears, xxviii, 22; or where Isaiah, in his tremendous image of Hades,

figures her extending her throat and opening her insatiable and immeasurable jaws, v. 14.

APOSTROPHE.

This figure and the former are derived from the same principle. For the like impulse which, to gratify a plaintive passion, leads us to bestow a momentary sensibility upon an inanimate object, does also incline us to bestow a momentary presence upon a sensible being who is absent. The same desire for sympathy which leads us to address our sorrows to the ocean, on whose shores we are standing, also moves to utter them to the absent friend whom that ocean separates from us. The memory of our former companionship, when we exchanged our feelings, becomes so very lively as to change for the moment from a mere reminiscence into a conviction that the absent one is at our side.

This figure is sometimes joined with personification; things inanimate, to qualify them for listening to our apostrophic appeal, being not only conceived to be present but personified.

Examples of the apostrophe are numerous in the sacred writers, and the figure is often managed with great boldness.

"O thou sword of the Lord, how long will it be ere thou art quiet? Put thyself up into the scabbard, rest, and be still. How can it be quiet, seeing the Lord hath given it a charge against Ashkelon, and against the sea-shore? there he hath appointed

it." Jer. xlvii, 6–7. "O death, I will be thy plagues! O grave, I will be thy destruction!" Hos. xiii, 14. "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" 1 Cor. xv, 55.

"Descend, and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon; sit on the bare ground without a throne, O daughter of the Chaldeans; for thou shalt no longer be called the tender and the delicate." Is. xlvii, 1. "Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city; for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean. Shake thyself from the dust; arise, and sit down, O Jerusalem; loose thyself from the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion." Isa. lii, 1–2.

CHAPTER V.

THE SYMBOLIC IN THE SCRIPTURES.

THE figurative and the symbolic are closely allied, in so far that a common principle underlies both, and the same style often distinguishes both. Hence there is a form of symbolic description, which might be resolved into one or other of the figures of speech; more especially the allegory and the continued metaphor. When these present an enlarged picture, or a succession of pictures, by means of visible objects, of a subject which is either invisible, or less obvious to the senses than the figurative objects are, they may be said to be symbolic. In this way several of the prophecies are given in the form of simple allegory. Such were Joseph's dreams; such was the vision, seen by Nebuchadnezzar, of the great image, whose brightness so dazzled, while its form overawed the imperial autocrat; such, also, as figured by the prophet, was the striking vision of the tree which grew and was strong, yet was ordered to be cut down and destroyed. Of the same nature are not a few of the symbolical representations by action, whether exhibiting past events, or events which are to come. These may be regarded as so many highly-figured allegories, or metaphors richly painted.

But there is to be found in the Scriptures a scheme of symbolism, which will not resolve into mere figures of speech. Its use was evidently intended to be more profound and far loftier, than merely to give a literary effect to the style. While figurative in its expression, there are undercurrents deeper than any figures of speech could carry.

On turning to the prophecies, we shall find that the language in which they are couched goes beyond the metaphor and allegory; for terms are used in a manner which is altogether unique and peculiar to this mode of representation; and this is done so much on system, or according to a uniform method, that the prophetic style requires a key of its own. Its vocabulary is singular; its language has an alphabet by itself. To decipher the prophetic hieroglyphics belongs rather to the exegesis than to the literature of Scripture. Yet it falls within our design to remark how rich is the literary dress in which their symbolism has clothed the prophetic writings. These visions of the future have an amazing scenic effect; are grand, sometimes gorgeous beyond conception, in consequence of the substitution of their symbolic images for the literary events themselves. A splendid drapery is thrown around these future histories, which in the ordinary historian would be extravagant; but which in the prophet is dignified and becoming as the solemn folds of his own prophetic mantle. There is a noble obscurity, as when the clouds, gilded by the

twilight from the unrisen sun, seem to pile up palaces upon the mountains' dusky summits. Any one may convince himself of this by turning to the pages of Ezekiel, Daniel, or John; and if with darkling pen these have written down on tablets of shadow the world's future history, this very obscurity hightens the artistic effect. A prediction which should present itself in bare literalities would want those spectral proportions, which only dimness can give to it, as we see it move on the indistinct verges of distant centuries. Whatever the rapt eye of the seer might itself descry, it could fling back for other eyes only mantled glances. And it is the working out of the symbolism necessary for this obscuration, which so amazingly exhibits the literary excellence of these prophetic compositions. The artistic effect in the working of light and shade is similar to the finest efforts of Rembrandt. The bare thought of a prediction, however ordinary the event predicted, has in it something sublime; and this sublimity is wonderfully sustained by the symbolic style of the prophets.

To enter on an examination of the prophetic style would lead us into the subject of Biblical interpretation, which is aside from our purpose. A single illustration, however, may be given. It is to be found in the chronology of the prophets, in which the term *day*, instead of the diurnal circle of twenty-four hours, counts the annual circle of the sun's revolution; in other words, a year. Now

why did these ancient seers reckon by days thus extended into years, rather than by years themselves? May not one reason have been to impress upon the mind of man, that when he works his little day counts no more than its own brief value—the few hours the earth takes to turn on its axis? whereas when it is God who works, *his* day swells in dimension and becomes as a year—the period of the far wider revolution, when our planet sweeps its entire orbitual curve.

The visual range of prophecy was not confined within our terrene horizon; for to her eye was given to pierce the world unseen. Now it will at once appear, that in his descriptions of the invisible world, the prophet could only describe by means of symbols. His pictures of a condition of existence of which we have no experience, if worked in colors borrowed from the earth, can be no other than symbolic representations. The material parts of his descriptions are not to be taken in their literal but in their suggestive sense. Does he represent heaven as a city, whose walls are of precious stones, its streets paved with gold?—this is simply a symbol of its magnificence. Are its inhabitants figured in white raiment, which glistens in unclouded light?—this is merely a symbol of their purity. The entire scenic representation is but one grand piece of symbolism. For clearly on no other principle could the unseen world and the future state be described, if the descriptions are to be at all pictorial. But this once

admitted, what an ample scope was given to the prophet to work out the magnificent imagery of the heavenly world! All that is beautiful and bright—all that is grand and gorgeous—the magnificence of architecture—the minstrelsies of music—the wealth of Eastern mines—the insignia of Eastern royalty—the rich vestments of Eastern costume—all could be collected into the prophet's representations. He could dip his pen in the glories of the first paradise—could borrow beauty from the landscapes of Palestine, and magnificence from its palaces—could gather into his pictures the sacred grandeurs which gleamed from the Temple, and enrich them with the loveliest hues of Mount Zion, "the perfection of beauty." Or working out his symbolism by means of contrast, he could figure a paradise where no serpent lurks to deceive—a sun-world where no sea lashes itself into storms—an orb of light where night does not alternate with day. In short, though what the prophet had to describe is that "which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath entered into the heart of man to conceive," yet working out his descriptions on the principle of symbolism, where, in any language, will we find a grandeur of apocalyptic imagery to compare with that with which the banished seer of Patmos has enriched the sacred literature?

It is, however, in the typology of Scripture that we shall best see its peculiar symbolism. It belongs, of course, to the theologian to set forth the

doctrinal meanings of the types; our business is only with their literary effect. And certainly this was to give a singularly-pictorial vividness to the sacred literature of the Hebrews. The bare description of the types, especially of those which were ritualistic, has made the Pentateuch read like a finely-illustrated work. It is profusely and most graphically pictorial. The pen of the sacred lawgiver becomes also the pencil of the sacred artist. The entire ritualism, under which are vailed so many spiritual meanings, is one grand picture-representation of heavenly truth.

It is a trite saying that it is a difficult thing to write suitable books for children, particularly on religion, so as to give to abstract truths that concrete form which will fix them on the infantile mind. Now here for the Church in its infancy or nonage, a body of divinity had to be written—a theological primer which should contain in substance the same profound revelations of the mind of God, which were to be hereafter given in the fullness of the times. How admirably suited for this purpose was the symbolistic manual which Moses prepared!

It has sometimes been a taunt with the infidel that the ritual of Moses was so sanguinary, and so offensive, even to the sight, that it turned the sanctuary as into a slaughter-house, and filled the holy places with ghastly spectacles; that it ensanguined the very literature of the Hebrews, for the book of Leviticus seems to drip with blood, and is

revolting with horrid details of sacrificial butcheries. "Conceive"—the infidel says—"what a repulsive sight it must have been when the tender lamb, just brought from the fold or the pasture-field, had its throat cut, its white breast smeared with its own gore, and its dismembered limbs laid on the altar-faggots to blacken in the flames. Or what a sickening sight it was to see the turtle-dove, which so lately cooed its tender responses to its mate, strangled, plucked of its feathers, and disemboweled. All this must have been excessively revolting to behold, while it could be scarcely less revolting to read a detailed account of it. A literature which describes it could only gratify a taste for the horrible, and of this sort was the early sacred history of the Hebrews, where you have the whole details of the disgusting spectacle." Such is the objection of the infidel, who forgets that if these sacrificial rites had been any less revolting, they would have failed in their great symbolic use. An image of sin—that abominable thing which God hateth—had to be presented; and it was to be seen in that bleeding lamb as it panted in its death-throes, its eyes become glazed and lusterless, its limbs rigid, its fleece dappled in its own gore. It was to be seen in that strangled dove, whose plumage is so ruffled, its wings draggled and torn, its very bowels protruding through the gash which the priest's knife had made. In these, sickening to look upon, what the Israelites saw was the image of sin. Those ghastly

changes which had come over the lamb, which a few hours ago was at its gambols on the green meadow, and over that turtle-dove, which yesterday cooed its note among the sycamore branches, or clove the air a thing of beauty and of life—those ghastly changes which have made creatures, lately so fair to look upon, now sickening to behold, were not exhibited as a mere spectacle, but were symbols of a great truth, which needed to be graven on the memory, even if it should be as with the point of a knife dipped in blood. As the worshiper gazed upon his sacrifice, what he saw was the image of sin—of himself the sinner: what he, polluted, depraved, death-doomed, was in the sight of the Holy One.

Nor was it sin only which was symbolized, but salvation as well. And how sustaining to hope, while having to look through the dim vista of centuries, to have set forth visibly before it the symbols of the "great salvation!" It is impossible for us fully to realize the impression which these prefigurative types would make on the mind of an ancient Hebrew. The gushing wound in the breast of the animal would lose its ghastliness in his eyes, when faith beheld, as in a mirror, the foreshadowed images of redemption.

Modern science has discovered a typical system in nature, of which one peculiar element is, that the earlier is a sort of prefiguration of the later. The seed contains what is to become the full-grown plant. The embryo has within it what is to ex-

pand into the full-grown animal. In the earlier geological ages we find rudimentary forms, with capacities and even organs, which become developed only in the more finished forms of the later vegetable and animal life.

A similar typical system is to be seen in the supernatural, as revealed in the Scriptures. A scheme of prefiguration unfolds itself with the progress of the sacred history. As the natural has its epochs of creation, at which the typical form makes a move in advance, approaching somewhat nearer to the archetypal idea; so has the supernatural its epochs of revelation, at which we discover a corresponding advancement in its typical representations.

There is thus unfolded a twofold aspect in which we may view the Scriptural typology. First, following out the analogy between the natural and the supernatural, each presenting a typical system, the Scripture types may be regarded as forming a part of the scheme of universal providence, which includes, in one great method, both departments, creation and redemption, the natural and the supernatural. This opens up a study at once philosophically profound, and of the highest picturesque beauty. In his late work on the "Supernatural in Relation to the Natural," Dr. M'Cosh has indicated some interesting tracts of thought, which one wishes the same able pen would more largely follow out.

But, secondly, keeping within the sphere of revelation, the types in Scripture have a value of their

own, as prefigurations of the grand archetypal ideas in the economy of redemption, which they were intended to adumbrate. We can not conceive a more pleasing or healthier exercise for the analogical faculty, than the study of the Old Testament types, when rightly pursued. The subject has at length been reduced to a scientific method by one of our most accomplished Scottish divines, Principal Fairbairn, in his very able work on typology.

The loose treatment of the types, which rejoiced in running out mere wire-drawn coincidences, without having got hold of any main or central idea, was ill fitted to give dignity and unity to these Divine symbolisms. A like style of interpretation used to be indulged when treating of the parables, which could not fail greatly to mar their beauty, whether in a theological or a literary point of view. It is the central idea which gives symmetry and coherence either to type or parable; even as the midrib to the veins in a leaf, or as a stem-branch to the off-shooting twigs. There is besides in the type the prophetic element, or the foreshadowing, on a lower platform, of an identical truth which is hereafter to be exhibited on a higher. And we take only that to be typical, in any theological sense, which is truly prefigurative. Had our commentators kept this more in their view, it must have served to check the too free license they have allowed to fancy in running out the types into all manner of minute parallelisms. It is in our opinion to

degrade the majesty of the Divine teachings by symbol, if we regard a type as other than a great thought, which, waiting its higher manifestations, was worthy to be anticipated in symbolic exhibition. To say, for instance, that Moses was a type of Christ, in respect that danger threatened the infancy of both, is to confound a mere historical coincidence with typical identity. Here was no root-principle, no essential law, nor any fundamental idea, in the method of Divine Providence toward our race, to be brought out. In like manner we dismiss some twenty other particulars in the life of Moses, as not meriting to be esteemed strictly typical. Viewed as coincidences they are interesting, some of them remarkable; as historical parallels they are instructive, shedding broad, revolving lights on Providence, when it is seen repeating itself, yet still progressive; but they do not rise into the region of that class of facts, which alone were worthy to be typified. This much only would we say of them, that they fall in with a natural expectation, that where two persons have a typical relation, the circumstances of their history will run more parallel, than where there is no such relation.

The great Hebrew prophet has himself seized upon and expressed the root-idea in the typical relation in which he stood to Christ. For if the reader carefully examines his words—Deut. xviii, 15–19—he can scarcely fail to perceive that the type is

founded upon, and gives sensible form to, the one idea of *mediation*. Here we have an essential principle in the method of Providence toward man. It was to have its archetypal consummation in the person and work of Christ; in Moses, a lesser personage, and on a lower platform, it had its typal adumbration. And, so far from this narrowing the type, we have but to start from this ground-idea, carrying it along with us, to find ourselves drawn into a multifold parallelism—a system of co-related ideas which circle round the main one, as satellites round their primary; and receiving from it, as these receive from their solar orb, a portion of its own light.

There is often a poetical beauty in the types—some fine thought fitly draped in the infolding symbolism. So have we thought of the tabernacle in the wilderness, with its holy of holies screened off by its woven portal, a type of heaven. What a poetic grandeur was thus made to encircle that fane of curtains! and how sublime by very contrast were these textile walls, when viewed as typical of the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens! So have we thought, also, of the brazen serpent in the desert. There is real poetry in this type, when one considers that image of death—the twined serpent so lifelike, yet lifeless—with healing power to the wounded. Could a more affecting prefiguration have been chosen of the great fact in redemption, that it was by death—the death of Him

who is very life—death was to be destroyed? So have we thought of the Temple at Jerusalem. A glory far exceeding its architectural splendors environed that sacred edifice which crowned Mount Zion. As we think of it, the only Temple on the face of the whole earth which, so long as it stood, had been built to the worship of the true God; how strikingly it foreshadows the cardinal truth in the Gospel—that there is but *one* way of access to God for fallen man—only one living temple, which is filled with the archetypal shekinah, and consecrated by the archetypal mercy-seat! So have we thought of that incident in the life of Jonah which was typical of the burial and resurrection of "the Son of Man." There has always appeared to us to be something of highest poetry about Jonah's typical entombment in his sepulcher of waters. The Savior himself was buried *on the land;* and since his resurrection was to be a pledge of the opening of the graves, it was fitting he should be buried where he was; seeing that on the land by far the greater numbers have their sepulchers. But now with this connect the type—the rising again of Jonah from his ocean-tomb—and the pledge of the resurrection becomes as it were complete; the waters are included as well as the solid land; the wave-shrouded corpses shall also rise; "the sea shall give up its dead."

CHAPTER VI.

THE SUBLIME IN THE SCRIPTURES.

It will readily be confessed that, to excel in these three—the sublime, the pathetic, and the picturesque—is the highest achievement of literary genius. By the sublime, to fill the soul; by the pathetic, to touch the heart; by the picturesque, to fascinate the eye. An author who succeeds in doing this proves himself a very master in literature. Swaying at his will the imagination, the emotions, and the taste, who will deny his power to be pre-eminent? Now, the sacred authors evidently possess this power—since they excel alike in the sublime, the pathetic, and the picturesque. In the present chapter I design to treat of the *sublime in the Scriptures.*

In order to sublimity in writing three things are requisite. First, the objects described must be such as are fitted to raise those ideas or emotions which we call sublime; for, if an author chooses mean or commonplace objects, then, however grand or lofty his descriptions of them, he does not merit to be called a sublime writer. His gorgeous language may produce a momentary sensation approaching to sublimity, just as a haze of mingled cloud and sun-

shine sometimes causes us to mistake a very ordinary hill for a lofty mountain; but unless the object itself is really sublime, the illusion will speedily pass away. Secondly, the writer himself must have a lively impression of the object which he exhibits; for if his own feelings are languid, he can never inspire his readers with any strong emotion, who have to take their impressions from his at second hand. Only when a writer has himself caught a heat and elevation of soul in the presence of the sublime, will his descriptions of it bear transmission through the medium of language, which in no case can equal open vision. Thirdly, not only must the object in itself be sublime, and the writer have a lively impression of its sublimity, but it must be set before us in such a light, so described in appropriate language, that a full and clear impression of it shall at once strike upon the mind of the reader; for unless the images of sublimity which the orator or poet conjures up impress us at once as sublime, the effect of his description is entirely lost. The sight of a cataract or a lofty mountain instantaneously produces a sublime impression, and so must it be with the description of them. We may not have to linger over the language for the impression to come by degrees, for in that case it will rarely come at all.

Now, the sacred writers possess in a very eminent degree these three requisites to the sublime in writing. For, in the first place, their chosen themes

and objects are wonderfully sublime. Among things *spiritual* what can be more grand or lofty than the being and perfections of the Infinite, Divine Providence, the origin of evil and its removal; or among things *historical*, what can equal for sublimity the creation of worlds, the incarnation of Deity, the redemption of a fallen race; or among things which are *prospective*, what is more sublime than the closing up of time when its "last day" shall have been numbered, the universal judgment of the quick and the dead, heaven with its consummated felicities, hell with its unutterable torments, and eternity with its countless ages; or among things *material*, what can be more sublime for *vastness* than the starry firmament and the mighty ocean; or for *energy* and *force*, than a thunder-storm, a tempest of wind, and the overflowing of waters; or for *solemnity and awe*, than the darkness of night, the solitude of the desert, and the silence of a vast forest; or for *scenic grandeur*, than the rising of the dead, and the great conflagration which is to reduce a world to ashes? Now, it is among such subjects as these that the sacred writers delight to expatiate. Nor shall we do them full justice if the impression is conveyed that they produce these lofty objects as if incidentally, or as a poet might intersperse his cantos with an occasional sublime episode. There is throughout an epical unity, these subjects forming, so to say, the warp and woof in the gorgeous web. Not more naturally do we look for stars in a

constellation, or for great planets in the system of which a magnificent sun is the central primary, than we expect to find objects which are sublime where the whole reach and sweep of thought is sublimity itself.

But in a cosmical system every part is not a star nor a planet. Each blade of grass which goes to mantle the hill-slopes on the latter; the very lichens which thinly clothe its escarped rocks; the ephemeræ which live their hour upon it and die—these also form parts of the system. Insignificant in themselves, they borrow a grandeur from the cosmical unity which they help to make up. And in this way also many an object, in itself trivial and little, acquires a dignity on the sacred pages by having a place assigned it in the grand totality of truth and providence.

The inspired writers by no means disdain to be conversant with familiar objects; but, on the contrary, wherever a moral lesson can be gathered, or an elucidation of truth be found, be it among the veriest commonplaces of man's daily observation, the sacred writers with an easy pen copy it on their lofty pages. And if in its familiar form it suits best to be written down, they make no attempt to invest it with meretricious grandeur. Yet, so much is it in their way to deal with sublime objects, that when they take occasion to notice any of a meaner cast, it is rare if they do not elevate them into the region of sublimity by the simple power of associa-

tion. The drifting clouds, though picturesque, are scarcely a sublime object; but to a devout mind they appear wonderfully sublime when represented as the chariot of God. The fall of a sparrow from the house-top has nothing of sublimity in it; but when this casual event is connected with the special providence of God—*his* eye watching alike the flight and the fall of the despised fledgling—it becomes morally sublime.

Then, secondly, the sacred penmen possess the emotion of sublimity in a very high degree. For their feelings in presence of the sublime are never languid, nor their impressions of it ever feeble. How the poetic rapture must have kindled and burned in the breasts of the ancient prophets! What holy frenzies must have seized on the minstrel spirit of David! What pulses of strong emotion beat quick in the heart-veins of Job! What sublime musings filled the soul of the lonely sage, who pondered the mysteries of Providence amid the mountain solitudes of Media! How Ezekiel seems to have gazed awe-struck on his own prophetic images! How tremblingly did Daniel look into those future ages, which rolled their distant centuries like sea-mists from an invisible horizon! What ecstatic fervors fired that gentle breast which sighed its sorrows and saw its visions on the prison isle of Patmos! What deep amazement was his to whom in mystic trance the third heavens revealed their secrets and poured forth their unutterable

symphonies! Sublimity! is it only to souls sublime, which can understand it and appreciate it, that it reveals itself—its silences and its solemnities; its hights and its depths; its grandeurs and its glory? Then were these men worthy to look upon it, for not on them were lost even the passing shadows of its mysterious forms; but when these had passed there remained on their souls images like to itself, vast, solemn, majestic, and sublime.

Thirdly, the sacred authors are complete masters of the proper style in which to describe a sublime object, and so to convey their own impressions of its sublimity. For they write with clearness, vigor, conciseness and simplicity; are ever natural; do not labor to be grandiloquent; seek not to accumulate turgid epithets and swelling phrases; but in words of simple grandeur, so well befitting their themes, they depict the sublime alike in nature or in grace. Indeed, except with those who have a true eye for the sublime, the great simplicity, one might say almost the nakedness of many of the Bible descriptions, will take from their impressiveness. But the same might be said of the works of nature. These, when grandest, are generally least elaborate. A treeless desert of sand—a heaving expanse of waters—a huge mountain, rudely blocked, capping its rugged brow with storm-clouds—these in form are as simple as may be conceived; yet in effect they are sublime beyond conception. The rush of cataracts—the booming of sea-billows—the crash of

the riven thunder-cloud—in these there are no diapason music-notes, nor choral symphonies; they are simple sounds—the untuned voice of Nature when she cries aloud: yet how sublime, without being musical, is that awful voice! To such, therefore, as have the true perception, the Bible of all books is most comparable with the great works of God—it is so sublime in its simplicity, and so simple in its sublimity.

It were easy to multiply examples of the admirable plainness and brevity of the sacred writers, when descanting on subjects of the greatest sublimity; but two may suffice. Suppose, then, an uninspired writer to attempt a description of the primeval chaos, when darkness and tempest held divided sovereignty of the ocean-earth; how labored his language would be, we may gather from reading the description which that most graphic of pens has essayed in the *Testimony of the Rocks*. But how brief, how simple—sublimely brief, majestically simple—is the description by Moses. In a single verse, containing not over thirty words, he raises an image of the chaos, which haunts the imagination as a terror-dream of the night: "And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit-breath of the Lord moved upon the face of the waters." Gen. i, 2. Or take his account of the creation of light; in some six words he strikes off, quick as the motion of that ethereal substance whose creation he de-

scribes, an image which by its sublimity evoked an encomium from even a heathen writer—"God said, Light be! and light was."

Even our greatest writers, when treating of sublime subjects, are apt to overload them with description, and to use language so very gorgeous that the words dazzle the eye from seeing what they ought rather to reveal. But this is never the case with the sacred writers. Thus, to compare Milton and Job, in the English bard, the ear is often so filled with the rhythmical roll of his ample verse, and the eye all but so oppressed with the gorgeousness of his diction, till what we think of is rather the poet's own marvelous power of description, than the object which he describes. Doubtless a great triumph this of poetic genius; but there is still a greater, which belongs to the Hebrew bard, who so fills our minds with the object described that we have no time to think of him who describes it. In matchless poetry is the war-horse described; but it is not the rhythm of the poet's numbers that rings in the ear—it is the clang of the war-steed's own hoofs as they strike fire on the battle-plain. In poetry equally matchless is the behemoth described; but it is not the beauty or the grandeur of the poet's language, great as these are, that fills the eye—the terrible creature itself seems to rise from its ocean depths, to measure its gigantic strength with the waves of the storm.

Among writers who have treated of the sublime,

I am not aware that there is one who has not gone for examples of it to the sacred writings. Nor is this to be wondered at, seeing that of all writings, ancient or modern, the Bible affords us the highest instances of the sublime. Without needlessly multiplying examples, some few may be cited by way of specimens. In his narrative of the creation, Moses has several strokes of the true sublime, one especially, which drew commendation from a heathen critic—"God said, Light be! and light was." Of this passage Lord Kames justly remarks, "It is scarce possible, in fewer words, to convey so clear an image of the infinite power of the Deity." David is more distinguished by tenderness and sweetness than by grandeur or sublimity; yet in his Psalms there are many grand and sublime passages. When he touches his lyre to describe the appearances of Jehovah to the ancient fathers, the swelling strings rise above their ordinary soft and tender sounds into a strain of the grandest majesty. "What an assemblage," says Dr. Blair, "of awful and sublime ideas is presented to us in that passage in the 18th Psalm, where an appearance of the Almighty is described: 'In my distress I called upon the Lord, and cried unto my God: he heard my voice out of his temple, and my cry came before him, even into his ears. The earth shook and trembled; the foundations also of the hills moved and were shaken, because he was wroth. There went up a smoke out of his nostrils,

and fire out of his mouth devoured: coals were kindled by it. He bowed the heavens also, and came down, and darkness was under his feet. And he rode upon a cherub, and did fly; yea, he did fly upon the wings of the wind. He made darkness his secret place; his pavilion round about him were dark waters and thick clouds of the skies. At the brightness that was before him his thick clouds passed; hailstones and coals of fire. The Lord also thundered in the heavens, and the Highest gave his voice; hailstones and coals of fire. Yea, he sent out his arrows, and scattered them; and he shot out lightnings, and discomfited them. Then the channels of waters were seen, and the foundations of the world were discovered at thy rebuke, O Lord, at the blast of the breath of thy nostrils.' Verses 6–15. Equally sublime is that other description in the 77th Psalm: "The waters saw thee, O God, the waters saw thee; they were afraid: the depths also were troubled. The clouds poured out waters; the skies sent out a sound: thine arrows also went abroad. The voice of thy thunder was in the heaven: the lightnings lightened the world: the earth trembled and shook. Thy way is in the sea, and thy path in the great waters, and thy footsteps are not known." Verses 16–19. Worthy to be classed with these is that noble passage in the prophet Habakkuk: "God came from Teman, and the Holy One from Mount Paran. Selah. His glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full

of his praise. And his brightness was as the light; he had horns coming out of his hand: and there was the hiding of his power. Before him went the pestilence, and burning coals went forth at his feet. He stood, and measured the earth: he beheld and drove asunder the nations; and the everlasting mountains were scattered, and the perpetual hills did bow; his ways are everlasting. I saw the tents of Cushan in affliction: and the curtains of the land of Midian did tremble. Was the Lord displeased against the rivers? was thine anger against the rivers? was thy wrath against the sea, that thou didst ride upon thy horses and thy chariots of salvation? Thy bow was made quite naked, according to the oaths of the tribes, even thy word. Selah. Thou didst cleave the earth with rivers. The mountains saw thee, and they trembled: the overflowing of the water passed by: the deep uttered his voice, and lifted up his hands on high. The sun and moon stood still in their habitation: at the light of thine arrows they went, and at the shining of thy glittering spear. Thou didst march through the land in indignation, thou didst thresh the heathen in anger. Thou wentest forth for the salvation of thy people, even for salvation with thine anointed; thou woundedst the head out of the house of the wicked, by discovering the foundation unto the neck. Selah." Chap. iii, 3–13.

When the imagination is conducted, in a succession of flights, over wide intervals of space—set off,

as it were, by an actual line or measure—the effect, in the first instance, is rather to lessen the idea of infinity; but when the measuring line has been applied to the last of these distances, and the imagination is still carried onward, the sense of bounds and limits is suddenly displaced by the idea of a boundless immensity. There is not now any thing definite by which the wind can take its bearings—not any thing substantial on which it can rest; but, having wandered through every part, and compassed the boundaries of creation, it finds itself imperceptibly gliding into the void of infinity, whose vast and formless extent impresses it with the sublimest and most awful sensations; and this so much the more, that till now it could measure its progress. There are many examples of this sort in the sacred writings, from which it will suffice to give the following:

"Canst thou explore the deep counsels of God? canst thou fathom the immensity of the Almighty? It is higher than heaven; what canst thou do? it is deeper than the abyss; what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the expanse of the sea." Job xi, 7–9.

"Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? and whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend the heavens, thou art there; if I make my bed in the abyss, behold thou art there! If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the extreme part of

the ocean; there also thy hand shall lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me." Ps. cxxxix, 7–10.

It is well known that obscurity hightens our impressions of the sublime; for the imagination, lost as in a darkling maze, becomes not only exhausted, but awe-struck by its own efforts to define the shadowy vastness, which seems about to sink, ere it can be seized, into abysmal night. Our own Milton has some fine strokes of this sort; that one especially where he so dimly delineates the huge bulk of the fallen archangel:

> "Thus Satan talking to his nearest mate
> With head up-lift above the wave, and eyes
> That sparkling blazed, his other parts beside,
> Prone on the flood, extended long and large,
> Lay floating many a rood."

We have a still finer example in the following passage in the book of Job: "In thoughts from the visions of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, fear came upon me, and trembling, which made all my bones to shake. Then a spirit stood before my face; the hair of my flesh stood up; it stood still, but I could not discern the form thereof." Chap. iv, 13–16. This writer not only abounds in sublime passages, but by the strength and dignity of his conceptions, and the current of high ideas that runs through his whole composition, preserves the reader's mind always in a tone nearly allied to the sublime.

The prophet Isaiah is another writer who is nota-

bly sublime. With wonderful elevation, and sudden as the sunward sweep of an eagle's wings, this Homer of Palestine begins his vision which continues through the reigns of four successive kings; yet never once does his muse flag or droop in her majestic flight. Nothing can be conceived more sublime; nothing within the whole compass of literature, ancient or modern, is to be found so sublime. The book is throughout as a mighty Alpine range, with occasionally a Mont Blanc towering its loftier summit, where all is lofty. Such is the following passage: "Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance? Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being his counselor, hath taught him? With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, and taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and shewed to him the way of understanding? Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance; behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing. And Lebanon is not sufficient to burn, nor the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt offering. All nations before him are as nothing; and they are counted to him less than nothing, and vanity." Chap. xl, 12–17. "Every one," says Dr. J. Brown, in his *Horæ Subsecivæ*— "every one must have trembled when reading that

passage in Isaiah, in which hell is described as moved to meet Lucifer at his coming; there is not in human language any thing more sublime in conception, more exquisite in expression; it has on it the light of the terrible crystal." As additional examples of the sublime, I would instance the mysterious vision which passed before the awe-struck eyes of the prophet Elijah at the cave in Horeb, 1 Kings xix, 11–13; the amazing description of a thunder-storm in the 29th Psalm, compared with which those of Lucretius, Virgil, or Byron, great poets as they were, are prosaically tame; that marvelous meditation upon the majesty, power, and providence of God in the 104th Psalm; the gorgeous vision of the four cherubim, overarched by the bow of glory, which drew the wondering eye of the son of Buzi in the land of the Chaldeans, by the river Chebar, Ezek. i; Daniel's dream with its mystic vision of the Ancient of Days—throne-seated on the ruins of empires, a fiery river rolling flame before him, while ten thousand times ten thousand ministers of vengeance wait but his signal to sweep the earth with their havoc wings, Dan. vii, 9–14; Joel's terrible picture of invading armies, innumerable as locust-bands, wasteful and devouring, Joel ii; the successive visions of Ezekiel which, like a magnificent panorama, moved as by a wizard's hand, cause the spectator to feel as if he were in a dream of amazement; the equally-gorgeous visions in the apocalypse; and that marvelously-sublime descrip-

tion of the resurrection which Paul gives in the 15th chapter of 1st Corinthians, closing with that lyric outburst, so fit to be the closing stanza in the psalm of life, which is to break from the lips of immortality over the bier on which death itself shall be carried to its grave, wrapped in a winding-sheet of flame.

Then the Bible itself, in any view we can take of it, is one of the most striking instances of true sublimity. It is sublime in its very name—*the* Scriptures, Jehovah's writings, God's book, in which the Invisible One breaks the silence of the eternal ages, divulging their awful mysteries and his own divinest thoughts to the sons of men in their human language.

It is sublime in its *antiquity;* sole monument of primeval literature; of primeval history; of primeval laws; the ancient of books, yet still the newest; for as fresh and fair as the rainbow of yesterday, or as the youngest primrose of early Spring, its pictures are as vivid, its beauties as shining, its lessons as appropriate, as when Moses the protoprophet wrote the first sentence on its mystic scroll beneath the shadows of ancient Sinai.

It is sublime in its *unity;* for though commenced before the birth of profane letters and not finished till the Augustan age of literature—though the work of forty different authors, who, separated by centuries, could not possibly have collusion, and ranging in social position from princes and lettered

scribes to herdsmen and unlettered fishers, might be supposed to differ widely in their views and impressions; yet this wondrous volume, which thus grew to what it now is, part by part, slowly, at long intervals, under different hands, in strangely-varied circumstances, during one entire millennium and half another, is to be seen like an unbroken bow stretching across the divided ages; the compact and completed arch of truth, with one limb resting on creation's prime, the other on the end of time; as evidently an emanation from one Master-Mind, though reared by forty different authors, as the iris, though reflected by millions of raindrops, is the workmanship of one Master-Hand.

It is sublime in its *literary achievements;* for though composed by writers dwelling secluded on a narrow selvedge of Eastern land, remote from the seats of classic literature, it has nevertheless gone out through all the earth to become the world's book; though written in two ancient languages which are no longer living tongues, it has notwithstanding made its voice to be heard in the vernacular dialects of the scattered family of Adam; though markedly Jewish in its cast of thought, it is now incorporated with the literature and the philosophy of every civilized country in both hemispheres.

It is sublime in its *sufferings* and in its *triumphs;* for it has endured the martyr's death by fire, and its blackened leaves have been strewn like the mar-

tyr's calcined ashes, on the winds of heaven and the waters of the earth; it has been immured in dungeons; has been interdicted by mailed princes and mitered priests; has been denounced as a dangerous and laughed at as a silly book; has been a butt for the shafts of ridicule, and a mark for the arrows of persecution; the skeptics of modern times had done to it what the ancient skeptics did to its Divine Master—buried it in the grave; and the priests of Rome, after the manner of the priests of Jerusalem, had rolled a stone on its grave's mouth, and sealed it with a seal. But this immortal book has come forth from its sepulcher, and by many wonders and signs has showed itself alive to the people; it has flung back from its invulnerable breast the shafts of the scoffer and the arrows of the skeptic; has shaken from its eagle wings the calumnies of slander; and as the phenix, not of mythologic fable, but of heavenly truth, it has risen from its ashes to light the world, when the stormy bale-fires of superstition shall blaze no more.

It is sublime in the *destiny* which it marks out for itself. What is to be the future history of this book? It is, say some, by the progress of science and philosophy to be exploded as an imposture, a myth, a dream of the human mind while it slept in the lap of superstition; it is, say others, to continue what it is, a mysterious child of antiquity, mantled in its age by the same mists which lay around the cradle of its infancy; it is, say others,

to come out of the crucible of the critics, not altogether consumed, but with much of the alloy which mixes with its virgin gold burned away; it is, say others, to be supplemented, and in a great measure superseded, by a new and fuller revelation. Idle prophets all! The book itself has a sublimer vaticination of its destiny: "The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away"—philosophy may perish, and science may cease, and literature may fail—"but the word of the Lord endureth forever."

Verily the Bible itself—its very existence—the bare idea of it, not to speak of its contents, is an example unparalleled in the history of letters, of the truly sublime.

CHAPTER VII.

THE PATHETIC IN THE SCRIPTURES.

It belongs to the pathetic to touch and set in motion the softer feelings of the breast. Less powerful perhaps than the sublime, its voice is more plaintive and persuasive. It seeks not to overawe and amaze, but to merit and subdue the soul to all tender emotions—sympathy with the sorrowing, pity for the distressed, charity toward all. Sighs are its natural utterance; tears its natural signs. Sublimity is as the rush of storm winds which wake up the grand music of the mighty forest; pathos as the breath of zephyrs when they stir the gentle music of the Aonian harp. If it needs less genius, it requires more knowledge of human nature, and a soul more finely set to human sensibilities, to be a master of the pathetic.

Of true pathos, as it vents itself in articulate utterance, there are many touches exquisitely affecting to be found in the Scriptures. David's lament over Saul and Jonathan is no less remarkable for its pathetic tenderness, than for its lyric passion. For what burning words of desolate grief are these, which would cover with a desolation equal to its own, the place where the mighty had fallen: "Ye

mountains of Gilboa, let there be no dew, neither let there be rain upon you, nor fields of offerings; for there the shield of the mighty is vilely cast away, the shield of Saul, as though he had not been anointed with oil." And then how softly sinks the voice of sorrow after this outburst, into a subdued plaintiveness, like a sad, sweet murmuring round the heart: "I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan; very pleasant hast thou been unto me; thy love to me is wonderful, passing the love of women." David's apostrophe to his dead son is a still more striking instance of the pathetic: "O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!" Nor reckon this a passionate outburst of extravagant sorrow, or the raving of maddened grief which knows not what wild words it is uttering; but think of the father who had suffered such cruel wrongs at the hand of this unnatural son, and then you will admire the pathos of paternal love which forgets all, except that the dead one was his son. Think, too, not merely of the untimely fate, but also of the character of the wretched youth who, without a moment to cry to Heaven for pardon, had been hurried into the eternal world with his unrepented sins on his head; and, ah, no wonder that the sainted father, who was himself ready to meet death, should in the anguish of his pity and his fears cry out, "Would God *I* had died for thee!" Take as another example of the truly pathetic, that incomparable

monody, the 137th Psalm. Here at first each word comes slowly as a labored breathing, but gradually the current swells, till at last the surcharged bosoms of the exiles overflow into a torrent of grief. How pathetic also are many of the penitential Psalms, where godly sorrow melts into a strain of the most tender repentance! Though one can not admire the man, yet is there something inexpressibly touching in Esau's sorrow, on finding that his brother had received the parental blessing: "And when Esau heard the words of his father, he cried with a great and exceeding bitter cry, and said unto his father, Bless me, even me also, my father!" As pictures of natural tenderness, what could be more simply touching, or more artlessly told, than the sacrifice of Isaac, especially at that part where the unsuspecting victim says to his father, "Behold the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?" Or the story of Jacob and Rachel; or of Joseph and his brethren; or of Ruth and Naomi. We challenge the whole circle of literature to produce any thing more truly pathetic than this: "And Ruth said, Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee; for whither thou goest I will go; and where thou lodgest I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God; where thou diest will I die, and there will I be buried." Poets in all ages have attempted to describe the love and constancy of woman—who in the first mutterings of the approaching storm trem-

bles as the aspen leaf; but when the tempest breaks will cling like the ivy to the gray wall, either to shield it or to share its fall; but where was ever that constant love so touchingly, so truthfully, yet briefly described, as in these few simple words of Ruth to Naomi?

I have given examples of the pathetic when its affecting sounds fall upon the ear, and there lingers the tremulous echo of its plaintiveness to move the memory with tender recollections. But the pathetic may reach us through the eye as well as by the ear. For there are sights, not less than sounds, which awaken pathos. Now in this form also of the pathetic the Scriptures abound; for they present us with many most affecting incidents; and here one thing is especially noticeable, as showing how perfect masters the sacred writers are of the pathetic in narrative; namely, that they never try to move our passions by working up a scene; but with brevity and without art—unless we shall say that artlessness is the perfection of art—they merely give the simple narrative, and leave it to produce its natural effect. How touching, for example, is the scene of the little children in the arms of Jesus! as if innocence, like a frightened dove, had nestled in the bosom of the Sinless One; or the scene near the grave of Lazarus, while that single verse, "Jesus wept," is in itself a very master-stroke of pathos; or the scene outside the gates of Nain, where one may scarcely say which affects him most,

the stricken sorrow of the widow-mother who is following the bier of her only son, or the sympathetic sorrow of the Savior, who gets out the touching salutation, "Weep not," and then, as if emotion had choked his utterance, could only touch the bier as a sign to bearers to stop. The scene on Mount Olivet is also very affecting—when Jesus, beholding the beautiful city lying at his feet in all the pride of its magnificence, unconscious as a sleeping child of its impending fate, wept over it. And, most affecting of all, is the farewell scene on the cross; while amid the agonies of a cruel death, the Savior, forgetting his own sore sufferings in his pity for a weeping mother, but unable to point to her—for they had nailed both of his hands—directed by an ineffable look of tenderness the eye of his beloved disciple toward her saying, "Behold thy mother;" and then, turning that same ineffable look on John to draw that mother's eye toward him, said, "Behold thy son." O pathetic tenderness, and pity most touching! He would not weep for himself, though they had crowned his brow with thorns, and pierced his hands and feet with nails, and given him vinegar and gall to drink when suffering his death-thirst; he had not a tear to shed till the sight of others' sorrow opened the founts of sympathy, and then its tears of pity, mingling with his blood of suffering, flowed freely forth.

degree pathetic; although we confess it was not till having looked upon Turner's rendering of it in his *Liber Studiorum*, that we felt how a true touch of pathos will thrill the nerves, as if a spirituous electricity were suddenly discharged along their threads. The painter's sketch exhibits a foreground of gloom, with one bit of purest radiance, "a light shining in a dark place," going out into the illimitable sky; while a few grim trees deepen their heavy umbrage between the dark and light; in the center of the foreground sits a woman as if own sister to melancholy, her face hidden, and in her hand a flaming torch; around her lie stretched out seven bodies as of dead men, half-naked, already indicating that foul decay had claimed the share which falls to it. There is a lion seen slinking off, with a sulky, disappointed look; and a bittern, as if scared, has just sprung up in the corner from a reedy pool. The waning moon sends down a sickly paleness on the barley sheaves, just sufficient to let us see that it is in the beginning of harvest. But who are these dead? They are the two sons and five grandsons of Saul, who "fell all seven together, and were put to death in the days of harvest, in the beginning of barley harvest." And who is she, the living one, who sits there keeping her unfailing, forlorn vigils? She is "Rizpah, the daughter of Aiah, who took sackcloth, and spread it for her on the rock, from the beginning of harvest, until water dropped upon them out of heaven, and suffered neither birds of

the air to rest upon them, nor the beasts of the field by night." The wonderful genius of the painter brought the entire scene before us, and held our eye as if spell-fixed on that desolate mother, who for five months—still at her ceaseless work, morn, noon, and night—kept watch by the bodies of her sons.

There is still a third form of the pathetic, when, rather by the force of association than by what we actually see or hear, our feelings are tenderly affected. And in this form, also, there abounds true pathos in the Scriptures. For example, there is something profoundly touching in the magnanimous pity which noble minds feel for objects which minds less noble would deem beneath their notice. Hence the pleasing emotion with which one reads these lines of the poet Cowper:

> "I would not enter on my list of friends
> The man who, needlessly, sets foots upon a worm."

Or these lines by a still greater poet—

> "The sense of death is most in apprehension;
> And the poor beetle that we tread upon,
> In corporal sufferance finds a pang
> As great as when a giant dies."

But how exquisitely more touching are some similar passages in Scripture! As this, for example, where it is the Infinite One who speaks: "And should not I spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than six score thousand persons that can not discern their right hand and their left hand,

and also much cattle?" Or this other, where it is the Divine Son who speaks, and of his Divine Father he says it: "Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God. . . . . Consider the ravens, for they neither sow nor reap, which neither have store-house nor barn, and God feedeth them."

Again, through the power of association, few things more sadly affect us than the sight of fallen greatness. As we look on a ruinous castle, its old walls, scarred by the pitiless storms, or blackened by the fiery brand of war, seem plaintively to echo with the memories of other days, when the sound of revelry rang through these now deserted halls, and chivalry mustered its mailed knights and men-at-arms on those ramparts, where now the melancholy owl has built her secluded nest; and where it is a moral ruin—some noble nature that has fallen, or some mighty kingdom that has wasted away, or some profligate city which has been overtaken with a sudden destruction—our feelings are still more profoundly melancholy. Now, where will you find so affecting instances either of the material or the moral ruin, as are furnished in the Scriptures? There, with pathetic sadness, you gaze on the physical desolation which has fallen upon the earth, smiting its soil with barrenness, and glooming its sky with storm-clouds, till its fairest parts are now but as the wreck of Paradise. There, also, with sadness still more pathetic, you look upon the fall of prime-

val man, the parent of our race; and upon the fall of beings loftier even than man—the apostate angels. And as one reads the ancient prophets, when their predictions are messages of doom, there often seems to mingle with the words of vengeance a plaintive wail, as if the avenging seer, touched with pity, but not permitted to revoke the denunciations, closes them with a death-dirge for the fallen. Thus, with a touch of the deepest pathos, does Isaiah describe the downfall of a once mighty monarch:

> "How art thou fallen from heaven,
> Lucifer, son of the morning!
> How thou art felled to the ground
> That didst weaken the nations!"

So, also, does the prophet Nahum, with an imagery not less splendid than it is pathetic, mourn the departed glory of the capital of Assyria: "Thou hast multiplied thy merchants above the stars of heaven; the canker-worm spoileth, and fleeth away. Thy crowned are as the locusts, and thy captains as the great grasshoppers which camp in the hedges on a cold day; but when the sun riseth they flee away, and the place is not known where they are." And then how sublimely pensive the requiem sounded over the graves of her slain: "Thy shepherds slumber, O king of Assyria; thy nobles shall dwell in the dust; thy people is scattered upon the mountains, and no man gathereth."

When the pathos is of the kind we have been describing—that is, implied rather than expressed,

sometimes the turn of a phrase, or a single word, will start a whole train of the most tender emotions. Many notable instances of this are to be found in the Scriptures. At the Last Supper, the Savior, in giving the broken bread to his disciples, said unto them: "Do this in remembrance of me." When one reads these few and simple words, in view of the memorial institution, what a flood of tenderness they pour round the heart! Do *this* in remembrance of thee!—*this* to show forth what thou, my Savior, didst endure for me! Yes, since thou hast so commanded, I will do this. But O, it tells not the thousandth part of thy willing sufferings for me! That bread which I see broken, *it* feels no pain; but when thy body was broken for me, it was pierced with bleeding pangs. That wine which I see poured forth, *it* felt no pain when it was pressed from the grape; but when thou wast in the wine-press of thy Father's wrath, thy soul was exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death. Another touching instance of suggested pathos is to be found in the words which the angel addressed to the women at the sepulcher: "Be not affrighted; ye seek Jesus of Nazareth who was crucified; he is risen, he is not here; behold the place where they laid him. But go your way, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him, as he said unto you." Mark xvi, 6, 7. There is something inexpressibly touching in the individual mention of Peter by name, seeing that, while the others were

plunged in grief, his sorrow was far more poignant; for he had denied that Lord whose living voice he now feared he would hear no more. How touching, in this view, is the sympathy which this angelic being shows for the sorrowing Peter! It is as if he had said, "Tell the glad news to all; but be sure especially that ye tell it to him whose heart is oppressed with a double sorrow." We have another instance of suggested pathos in what might be called the masked reproof which Jesus gave to Peter after his resurrection. Three times he said unto him, "Lovest thou me?" How keen, yet how tender the reproof conveyed in the thrice-repeated question, for thrice-repeated had been Peter's denial of his Lord!

Such examples of the pathetic as I have instanced or alluded to may, perhaps, have their parallels in other writings; for the masters of literature have, in all ages, striven to show their powers of pathos. But in the Scriptures there are instances of a pathos which can be found in no other book; because in no other book is Jehovah heard pleading with his sinful creatures, or the Son of God with his Divine Father. Here we find ourselves on ground which is solemnly sacred, and feel that we are listening to accents which are mysteriously pathetic. For hear in what moving appeals the Holy Infinite addresses the sin-defiled potsherds of the earth: "As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in him that dieth." "Look unto me and be ye saved, all ye

ends of the earth." "Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die?" "All day long have I stretched out my hands to a disobedient and gainsaying people." Surely this is pathos—the Jehovah pleading, striving, entreating with sinners; the voice of the Almighty tremulous with emotion; the great heart of the Infinite heaving with the earnestness of its compassions; the hands that created the universe stretched out as a supplicant's, to draw the wanderers back to an injured Father's love—this is pathos to which we vainly search for a parallel in any other writings, either ancient or modern.

Again listen: The Son of God had consented, for the sons of men, to drink the cup of human agonies and of Divine wrath; and while within the shadows of this mysterious suffering, hear how that Son, agonizing unto tears, pleads with his Father—that same Father in whose bosom, in Divinest companionship, he had lain from the unbeginning ages: "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me." "Now is my soul troubled and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour." "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Mysterious pathos! My pen has copied its weeping words, but what pen could write its bleeding thoughts? When man pleads with his fellow-man, or when human son appeals to human father, there is a chord in my breast responsive to each pathetic word. But when it is the Son of God I hear, in agony, in tears, in blood, in desertion, at the dark hour of death,

pleading with his Father, all the chords of my breast tremble with an undefinable emotion, and my whole soul is awe-struck with the conscious feeling that here is a pathos infinitely beyond what I can ever feel, far less express.

If under the head of the pathetic we include what in oratory is called *persuasion*, when a speaker, in order to carry with him the sympathy of his audience, addresses their passions, we shall find examples of this description of pathos in the Scriptures which neither ancient nor modern eloquence excels. The writings of Paul are preëminently pathetic, in this sense. They furnish, indeed, a model to the orator by their just combination of the argumentative and the hortatory. For this great logician invariably prepares the way for any persuasive appeal by first addressing the understanding of his readers, so as to produce conviction; and when, by argument and reasoning, he has succeeded in doing this, then he shows himself an equal master of rhetoric in the appeals by which he seeks to touch the heart. The entire epistle to the Romans is an unrivaled example of this happy union of the argumentative and persuasive, in which it were difficult to say which is the more to be admired, the rigorous exactness in the former or the passionate fervor in the latter. Certainly the maxim *ars est celare artem* never was more finely illustrated than in some of those sudden outbursts in which this writer,

with apparent abruptness, yet in no instance till after due preparation, gives vent to his own impassioned feelings. There is a seeming impetuosity in these sudden appeals which takes the heart, as it were, by storm; yet, when you analyze the effect, you find it due, in no small part, also to the preparatory argument. And the great art of the sacred orator is to be seen in this, that, having firmly riveted the subject on the understanding of his readers, he seizes the critical moment that is favorable to emotion, and kindles their passions before they are aware.

This truly-great master of the persuasive will be found to exhibit every species of excellence in this department of eloquence. You will find, for example, that when he is pathetic the subject is uniformly such as to admit of pathos. He never attempts to excite the passions in the wrong place. When he warms and kindles with his theme, his readers can not fail to be convinced that there is good and sufficient reason for his warmth; and, on their catching his ardor, they remain satisfied that they have not been carried away by a mere delusion. Again, you never find him sounding a note of warning that he is about to be pathetic; or calling upon his readers to prepare themselves to be moved. This expedient, sometimes resorted to by less skilled orators, seldom fails to have the opposite effect; for, instead of disposing them to be moved, it rather disposes them to criticise. Then, also, you

can see that it is the internal emotions of the writer himself which gives their pathos to his words; and thus he fulfills one of the prime conditions of being pathetic—namely, that when we would move others we must ourselves be moved. Then, besides, Paul's style in these persuasive appeals exhibits the proper language of the passions. It is precisely such as a person under the power of a strong emotion would employ—bold, ardent, simple. In his argumentative parts the style is often involved and parenthetical; but in those parts where he has become heated with his subjects, and aims at persuasive appeal, we perceive a marked difference in the style. Instead of involved periods, the sentences are short, rapid, terse; the parentheses are fewer; there is a force, almost a vehemence in the language; and if there occurs occasionally a bold figure, yet is there an entire absence of any thing like art or labor. In short, it is the very style of the orator when he wishes to be persuasive.

I have treated separately on the pathetic and the sublime, but when pathos is carried to its highest pitch, it may in truth be said to have become sublimity. This is specially the case in the language of the passions, such as love, admiration, joy, shame, remorse, and hatred. Then the pathetic and sublime might be compared to two tremulous drops on the same string, which touch, tremble, and unite. Now we know no book which contains more striking

examples of the sublime of passion than are to be found in the Hebrew Scriptures. There we shall find admiration breaking forth into bold and elevated utterances; joy exulting in its still more bold and elevated strains; resentment flinging forth its withering, scornful words; grief, not only in its stricken sorrow when it sits with bowed head speechless in the dust, but also when it rises in the frenzy of its anguish, and becomes heated almost to fury and madness; remorse, when it smites the breast as in self-revenge, and stings itself with the bitterness of its own wild regrets.

Admiration, if the object which has excited it is of a lofty cast, fills the mind with great and magnificent conceptions and sentiments, which it expresses in language which is bold, elevated, and glowing—in sentences abrupt, energetic, concise, and rapid. Take the following examples:

"Jehovah reigneth; let the people tremble: he sitteth upon the cherubim; let the earth be moved." Ps. xcix, 1.

"Who is like unto thee among the gods, O Jehovah? who is like unto thee, adorable in holiness, fearful in praises, who workest wonders? Thou extendest thy right hand, the earth swalloweth them." Exod. xv, 11, 12.

"O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out." Rom. xi, 33.

"Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God!" 1 John iii, 1.

Joy is still more elevated, exults in a bolder strain, and comes with a rush from a deeper fountain of the breast. This passion kindles on the holy page with its most sacred ardors, those which a sense of the Divine favor and benignity inflames. It seizes upon the most splendid imagery, which it adorns with the most animated language; it revels, as it were, in the luxury of its high delights, nor does it hesitate to risk the most daring and unusual figures. The Song of Moses, of Deborah and Barak, exhibit the loftiest sublimity of exultant joy, both in the sentiment and the language. In the 96th Psalm what noble exultation, what lofty tone of triumph, where the whole animate and inanimate creation unite in one grand lyric of praise to their Maker! And even in that higher state of unalloyed fruition, where no sigh mingles with the voice of happiness, and where all tears are wiped from every eye, does not the following realize our fullest conception of what would be the language of beatific joy? "And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book and to open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests; and we shall reign on the earth."

In the representation of anger and indignation,

particularly when the Divine wrath is displayed, nothing can be greater or more magnificent than what of this sort is to be met with in the Scriptures. The words burn. Every utterance is as a flashing stroke. The language withers as the fierce wind of the desert.

"For the day of vengeance was in my heart,
And the year of my redeemed was come.
And I looked, and there was no one to help;
And I was astonished that there was no one to uphold;
Therefore my own arm wrought salvation for me.
And mine indignation itself sustained me.
And I trod down the people in mine anger;
And I crushed them in mine indignation;
And I spilled their life-blood on the ground."
Is. lxiii, 4–6.

Grief, in its more impassioned attitude, when its fury sustains it, and its voice has in it a tone of frenzy, vehement, fervid, acute, requires a hand at once bold and delicate rightly to depict it. But we shall find this done with great success by the sacred penmen. Take the following from Job as translated by Mr. Scott. Job vi, 2, 3, 4, 8, 9.

"O for a balance poised with equal hand!
Lay all my sorrows there 'gainst ocean's sand:
Light is the sand whereon the billows roll,
When weighed with all the sorrows of my soul.
Ah! therefore, therefore, does my boiling woe
In such a torrent of wild words o'erflow;
Rankling I feel th' Almighty's venomed dart,
His arrows fire my veins and rend my heart;
His terrors 'gainst me throng in dire array,
War urging war, his boundless wrath display.
O, that relenting at my earnest cry,

God would extend his thund'ring arm on high;
Ruthless at once his smold'ring trident throw,
And, forcing through his mark the vengeful blow,
At once destroy me."

Both in the excitation and expression of terror, the sacred writers show themselves to be masters in the sublime of passion. What a terrific representation, at which dismay might well stand aghast, is the following by Isaiah:

"Howl ye for the day of Jehovah is at hand:
As a destruction from the Almighty shall it come.
Therefore shall all hands be slackened;
And the heart of every mortal shall melt;
And they shall be terrified;
Torments and pangs shall seize them;
As a woman in travail they shall be pained:
They shall look upon one another with astonishment;
Their countenances shall be like flames of fire.
Behold, the day of Jehovah cometh inexorable;
Even indignation and burning wrath;
To make the land a desolation;
And her sinners shall he destroy from out of her.
Yea, the stars of heaven, and the constellations thereof,
Shall not send forth their light:
The sun is darkened at his going forth,
And the moon shall not cause her light to shine.
And I will visit the world for its evil,
And the wicked for their iniquity;
And I will put an end to the arrogance of the proud;
And I will bring down the haughtiness of the terrible.
I will make a mortal more precious than fine gold;
Yea, a man than the rich gold of Ophir.
Wherefore I will make the heavens tremble;
And the earth shall be shaken out of her place,
In the indignation of Jehovah, God of hosts."
Is. xiii, 6–13.

As an example of vehement grief, hightened by terror, I would cite the remarkable vision, in which

Jeremiah exhibits the impending slaughter and destruction of Judea:

> "My bowels, my bowels are pained, the walls of my heart;
> My heart is troubled within me; I can not be silent;
> Because I have heard the sound of the trumpet,
> My soul the alarm of war.
> Destruction has come upon the heels of destruction;
> Surely the whole land is spoiled;
> On a sudden have my tents been spoiled;
> My curtains in an instant.
> How long shall I see the standard?
> Shall I hear the sound of the trumpet?
> I beheld the earth, and lo! disorder and confusion;
> The heavens also, and there was no light."
>
> Jer. iv, 19–23.

To this I would add that brief passage in the Revelation, which by a single stroke raises such an image of anguish mingled with terror: "Behold, he cometh with the clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also who pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE PICTURESQUE IN THE SCRIPTURES.

THE picturesque in writing is the art of representing objects of vision, and presenting to the imagination any circumstance or event as clearly as if they were delineated in a picture; or, more briefly, it may be defined *word-painting*.

The picturesque in the sacred writings has not, we think, received that consideration from our critics which the subject merits; and, in consequence, full justice has not been done to amazing pictorial powers of the sacred writers. Our limits, however, will permit us to do little more than draw attention to this interesting branch of Biblical literature.

If we take first the Bible descriptions of domestic and familiar life, we shall find that they have all the effects of a picture. One might compare them to a painting by Rembrandt, or perhaps rather by Sir David Wilkie, who knew so well, by a few soft touches, how to mellow the quaint picturesqueness of homely life into the poetry of sentiment. How very graphic, for example, are the delineations which the author of Genesis has given us of the simple manners of the patriarchs! The entire book may be regarded as one continued picture-gallery,

or, we might say rather, a series of *tableaux vivants*, which, with wonderful animation and distinctness, restore to us the men and the manners of a long by-gone age. Abraham sitting in his tent door; Isaac going forth to the fields at even-tide to meditate; old Jacob weeping on the neck of his long-lost son—these, and many similar, are as vividly before our eyes as if we were looking on so many pictures hung round our household walls.

In order to picturesqueness, especially in the delineation of homely incidents, there needs to be an air of verisimilitude, which only some natural touches, without the appearance of design, can impart. As has been said:

"One touch of nature makes the whole world kin;"

and when the poet, painter, or historian, has turned this maxim to account, no matter how remote the age or alien the manners which he describes, his description will at once come home with all the force and freshness of reality. We find this often verified in the Scriptures. How true to nature, by one single touch, has Moses described an incident in the deluge! With spent strength and drooping wing the dove has barely been able to reach the ark—a moment's delay, and the weary bird might fall into the surging flood; but "Noah put forth his hand and took her and *pulled* her in unto him into the ark." The scene before Abraham's tent door in the plains of Mamre, when he entertained the three

angels, is picturesquely described throughout; but one part especially is rendered true to the life by a single natural touch. It is where Sarah's incredulousness that she would become a mother in her old age is described. The thing appeared to her utterly ludicrous, but open laughter would have been dis courteous to the strangers; nor would it have consisted with the modesty of her sex, on such a subject to have betrayed outward emotion. A smile rose to her lips, but courtesy and modesty repressed the laugh—"Sarah laughed *within herself.*" The first interview between Isaac and Rebekah has its picturesqueness greatly hightened by some natural touches. When we read that Isaac has chosen the shades of even-tide and its pensive hour to go into the fields to meditate, it seems so natural in the expectant lover, to whom doubtless hope had begun to whisper that the looked-for one must now be on the way. And then Rebekah, the betrothed bride, lets out with charming *naïveté* of whom she was thinking by her question, "What man is this who walketh in the field *to meet us?*" On hearing, as no doubt she expected, that it was Isaac, a fond impatience caused her to alight from her camel, for she had been too simply brought up to act a prudish part; yet true to her sex's modesty she drops her vail to conceal from *him*, at their first meeting, her blushing charms. David's Hymn of the Captives has always struck us by one exquisite touch of nature which is in it. The philosophy of laugh-

ter is perhaps deeper than even that of tears. We laugh when merry, and we laugh when sad. Our tears and our laughter sometimes strangely blend. It was, therefore, a most natural stroke in the poet to make the manumitted captives say, in the suddenness of an unexpected joy: "Then was our mouth filled with laughter and our tongue with singing." Ps. cxxvi. In giving one other example how these touches of nature highten the picturesque, I shall turn to the New Testament, where I select the account which is given of the miracle which followed close upon the day of Pentecost—Acts iii, 1–11. The entire incident is very graphically described, and the grouping of the picture is quite picturesque—the Temple in the background; the lame man, laid at one of its gates—it is that which is called Beautiful—to ask alms; the two apostles about to pass through it, conspicuous among the crowd who are thronging in, for it is the hour of prayer. Here was a fit subject for Raphael's pencil, who, selecting the moment when the miracle was being wrought, has succeeded in catching the natural expression of the cripple—astonishment blended with delight, and hope with fear, lest all might turn out to be a dream; and also his natural attitude, combining agility with awkwardness, since now for the first time these forty years has he used his limbs. But the historian has a succession of natural touches, which the painter's more circumscribed art would not permit him to introduce. First there is that

stroke so true to nature—"he leaping up stood;" for the moment the cripple felt strength coming into his ankles, he was like a captive whose chains are unlocked, and he did just what that captive would do—sprang up as with irrepressible ecstacy at finding himself free. Then we read that on his way into the Temple he walked and leaped by turns; it was the same impulsive joy, breaking out into rapid motion, but anon curbed into a more measured pace, when smitten as it were with a sense of the unseemliness of its antic haste. Then, also, we are told, that "the lame man who was healed *held* Peter and John"—it was gratitude loth to part with its benefactors till it has poured forth its thanks anew. These might be thought minute particulars for an inspired pen to have recorded; but they give life and character to the picture.

If we now turn to the more strictly-historical parts of Scripture, we shall find in them also a marvelous picturesqueness. Nor is this the result of elaborate description, for the style is uniformly simple, while for the most part the narrative is brief and condensed. In this respect there is a vast contrast between the sacred and the more popular of our profane historians; for we do not find on their pages any thing approaching the gorgeous elaboration of a Gibbon, or the sparkling antitheses of a Macaulay, or the quaint minuteness of a Frois-

sart. Yet as the hand of a true artist may be seen in an etching, as well as in a highly-finished engraving, so in the historic sketches in the Scriptures—for they are seldom more than sketches—we find, notwithstanding the brief narrative and the simple style, a wonderful picturesqueness.

There are two artifices by which a historian, even when his descriptions are meager, can greatly enliven his narrative. The one is, when sensible that the eye is the best avenue to the heart, he represents every thing as passing in our sight—when from readers we are transformed, as it were, into spectators. By this contrivance a writer of genius can impart even to a brief narrative a wonderful picturesqueness, when each incident makes its impression not as if heard at second hand, but when seen by an eye-witness. The other artifice which exceedingly helps to enliven a narrative is to throw it as much as possible into the dramatic form, when the writer conceals himself and presents his personages to tell their own story.

Of this latter expedient the sacred historians have made abundant use. It is not merely a historic panorama they hold up to our view; but there is a living pageant—the actors in the scene, the *dramatis personæ*, are there; to whom we listen while, as interlocutors in a dialogue, they relate their adventures in our hearing. And thus it happens that the oldest history in the world has a freshness which many a modern history fails to possess.

With regard to the former expedient—namely, the representation of past and future events in the present tense, by which means whatever is described or expressed is in a manner brought immediately before our eyes—the sacred writers were debarred from using it by a somewhat strange peculiarity in the Hebrew language. For the Hebrew verbs have no form for expressing the indefinite of the present tense, or an action which is now performing; this being usually effected by a participle only, or by a verb substantive understood. It was probably this defect in their language which led the sacred writers when expressing future events not unfrequently to make use of the past tense; and when expressing past events, the future tense. From this arose a much more frequent change or variation of the tenses in the same continuous narrative than occurs in ordinary writers; and the effect of this is often like that of shifting lights upon a picture or landscape.

Of the first of these forms of construction—namely, the expressing of the future by the past tense—we have a striking example in Isaiah's prediction of the inroad of Sennacherib. Though the event was still future, with great exactness and perspicuity the prophet has traced the route of the invader toward Jerusalem, and the different stages of the army, insomuch that the prediction has all the lively verisimilitude of a historical narration:

> "He is come to Aiath; he hath passed to Migron:
> At Michmas he will deposit his baggage.

They have passed the Strait; Geba is their lodging for the night;
Ramah is frightened; Gibeah of Saul fleeth.
Cry aloud with thy voice, O daughter of Gallim;
Hearken unto her, O Laish; answer her, O Anathoth.
Madmena is gone away; the inhabitants of Gebim flee amain.
Yet this day shall he abide in Nob;
He shall shake his hand against the mount of the daughter of Sion." Is. x, 28–32.

After the same style is Joel's prediction of the plague of locusts:

"For a nation hath gone up on my land,
Who are strong and without number;
They have destroyed my vine, and have made my fig-tree a broken branch.
They have made it quite bare, and cast it away; the branches thereof are made white.
The field is laid waste; the ground, the ground mourneth."
Joel i, 6, 7, 10.

Both these are examples of what the grammarians call *vision*, in which animated narrative, for the sake of picturesque effect, is not unfrequently expressed. Those future actions and events an English writer, according to the idiom of the language, might have expressed in the present tense; the Hebrew writers do in effect the same thing, when, in accordance with the idiom of the Hebrew verb, they employ the past tense.

In the other form of construction—namely, the expressing of past events by the future tense—the sacred writers impart a variety to their narrative style, which is altogether peculiar. We have an example of this in the Song of Moses, where, after mentioning the Divine dispensation by which the

Israelites were distinguished as the chosen people of God, he proceeds to set forth with what love and tenderness the Almighty had cherished them from the time when he brought them from Egypt; how he had led them by the hand through the wilderness, and, as it were, carried them in his bosom. These were past events, and accordingly the portion of the song which records them, in our English version, has been rendered in the past tense; but in the Hebrew they are expressed in the future tense:

> "He will find him in a desert land,
> In a vast and howling wilderness:
> He will lead him about; he will instruct him;
> He will keep him as the pupil of his eye."
>
> Deut. xxxii, 10.

The observation of Bishop Lowth on this passage appears to me to be the true explanation of the peculiar construction: "You will readily judge whether this passage can admit of any other explication than that of Moses supposing himself present at the time when the Almighty selected the people of Israel for himself, and thence, as from an eminence, contemplating the consequences of that dispensation." By the power of sympathy, the reader is, in a like manner, made to suppose himself carried back, to become, along with the writer, an eye-witness of the scenes described; and thus the picturesque effect is amazingly hightened.

This matter of the Hebrew tenses—the substitution of the past for the future, of the future for the

past, and the rapid transition from the one to the other, has caused no small perplexity to the grammarians and the commentators. But one thing is very manifest; namely, that greater picturesqueness is imparted to the narrative; for, as I have already remarked, the effect of the sudden changes of the tenses may be compared to that of shifting lights upon a landscape or a painting.

But if we would see to full advantage the picturesque in the Scriptures, we must turn to their physical delineations of nature. In this department they incomparably surpass all the other writings of antiquity. The features of the country in which he lives exert a strong influence on the mind of a writer, and unless he is destitute of the graphic art, if its scenery is strongly marked, he can scarcely fail to be picturesque when describing it. Now the sacred writers dwelt in a region which was peculiarly favorable to topographical delineations; for theirs was a land of the mountain and the flood—of hills and valleys—of brooks and streams—of spots of exuberant vegetation alternating with iron-ribbed rocks and arid desert—a land which, as it has been justly remarked, "united the phenomena of Summer and Winter, the pasturage of the North with the palms of the South; so that, in a few hours, an Israelite might pass from the soft luxuriance of a sunny vale to the rocks and groves of Antilibanus, from a garden like the bowers of the first pair in

Eden, to the savage sterility of the deserts of Engedi." Yet, neither this striking natural scenery, nor the skyey influences of an Eastern climate would have imparted their rare picturesqueness to the sacred writers unless they had possessed that poetic susceptibility which has showed itself in their intense sympathy with nature. The poets and orators of ancient Greece lived in a land which, for the transparency of its skies and the grandeur of its scenery, was second only to Palestine; yet, compared with the delineations of nature which we meet with in the Hebrew poets, how cold and unimpassioned are those which we find in the Grecian! "If we bear in mind," says Schiller, "the beautiful scenery by which the Greeks were surrounded, and remember the opportunities possessed by a people living in so genial a climate of entering into the free enjoyment of the contemplation of nature, and observe how conformable were their mode of thought, the bent of their imagination, and the habits of their lives to the simplicity of nature, which was so faithfully reflected in their poetic works, we can not fail to remark with surprise how few traces are to be met among them of the sentimental interest with which we, in modern times, attach ourselves to the individual characteristics of natural scenery. The Greek poet is certainly, in the highest degree, correct, faithful, and circumstantial in his descriptions of nature; but his heart has no more share in his words than if he were treating of a garment, a

shield, or suit of armor. Nature seems to interest his understanding more than his moral perceptions." The same thing, and more strongly, might be said of the Roman poets. But when we turn to the Hebrew poets, we find their landscape-pictures suffused with life, warmth, and animation. Their own minds pervaded by a profound feeling of nature, they have breathed a sympathetic glow into all their descriptions of it. They cling to its charms with the fervor and the plaintive passion of the poet of modern times. They exhibit, in a very rare degree, that form of poetic susceptibility which Foster has felicitously called *physiopathy*—"the faculty of pervading all nature with one's own being, so as to have a perception, a life, an agency in all things." For even into their cosmical delineations the sacred writers have transfused their own life, as if they inherited the distant stars, and felt a personal interest in each shining sphere. Yet we never find pictorial exactness sacrificed to poetic emotion, for their physical descriptions are uniformly characterized by their truthfulness to nature. On this point I prefer giving the words of Humboldt: "As descriptions of nature, the writings of the Old Testament are a faithful reflection of the character of the country in which they were composed, of the alternations of barrenness and fruitfulness, and of the Alpine forests by which Palestine was characterized. They describe, in their regular succession, the relations of the climate, the manners of this people of herds-

men, and their hereditary aversion to agricultural pursuits. The epic or historical parts are marked by a graceful simplicity, almost more unadorned than those of Herodotus, and most true to nature; a point on which the unanimous testimony of modern travelers may be received as conclusive, owing to the inconsiderable changes effected, in the course of ages, in the manners and habits of a nomadic people."

The Hebrew Psalmist, who is so preëminently the poet of devotion, has proved himself to be no less the poet of nature. Many of his descriptions, both of the celestial phenomena and of terrestrial scenery, are amazingly picturesque, and over many of these it sheds a flood of new significance, when the reader understands the mechanism of the Psalms in which they occur. In the 29th Psalm, for example, we have a description of a thunder-storm, which is exceedingly enhanced when one attends to the geographical structure of this majestic ode. We are to conceive the Psalmist standing with the awe-struck multitude in the Temple porch, watching the march of the thunder-storm as it advances from the Mediterranean, or "great sea," and at last bursts in a water-flood around themselves.

There is sometimes a singularly-pleasing euphony in what we might call the merely-topographical passages of the Old Testament, arising from a cadence and resonance in the sound of the names. "Any one," says Dr. Brown, "who has a tolerable ear and

any sensibility, must remember the sensation of delight in the mere sound—like the color of a butterfly's wings, or the shapeless glories of evening clouds, to the eye—in reading aloud such passages as these: 'Heshbon shall cry, and Elealeh; their voice shall be heard to Jahaz; for by the way of Luhith with weeping shall they go it up; for in the way of Horonaim they shall raise a cry. God came from Teman, the Holy One from Mount Paran. Is not Calno as Carchemish? is not Hamath as Arpad? is not Samaria as Damascus? He is gone to Aiath; he is passed to Migron; at Michmash he hath laid up his chariots; Ramath is afraid; Gibeah of Saul is fled; lift up thy voice, O daughter of Gallim; cause it to be heard unto Laish; O poor Anathoth. Madmenah is removed; the inhabitants of Gebim gather themselves to flee. The fields of Heshbon languish; the vine of Sibmah; I will water thee with my tears, O Heshbon and Elealeh.' Any one may prove to himself that much of the effect and beauty of these passages depends on these names; put others in their room and try them."

We have discovered two of the causes which go to account for the pleasing picturesqueness of the Bible descriptions of the physical universe; namely, their truthfulness to nature and the strong sympathy which the writers felt with nature. The first gives to them a pictorial exactness, which makes them pleasing as faithful reflections of objective nature; while the second, by interfusing the sub-

jective life of the writer, imparts a poetic warmth to his pictures which renders them something higher than mere copies. And the result of the two combined is what the reader will not find, at least in any other ancient writing, that union of reality with idealism, which alone can enable a writer truthfully to delineate the *face* of Nature—that is, while presenting her great permanent features, also to catch that ethereal, ever-shifting expression which gives individuality or its idiosyncrasy, so to speak, to each several piece of the landscape.

There is yet another cause which has largely contributed to the picturesqueness of the Biblical delineations of nature; namely, the true perception which the writers had of what nature really is. The ancient polytheist managed to throw a certain poetic coloring over his landscape which he borrowed from the fictions of his mythology. Dryads peopled the woodlands; Oreads flitted over the mountains; Naiads gave mirth to the waters and music to the streams. But without the aid of these fabulous divinities the sacred writers have bathed their landscapes in still warmer hues. The modern pantheist also is able to infuse into his pictures of nature an amazing warmth and richness. But this he accomplishes not by simply describing the universe, for he must first deify it, and thus, confounding God with nature or nature with God, and so interfusing each into the other as one substance, it is a God-world of his own creation, which he throws in so

gleaming images across men's eyes to dazzle and astound. But the Hebrew writers, without deifying nature, have described it as glowingly and clothed it in as great a sublimity as the pantheist. With them creation is distinct from the Creator, and nature not consubstantial with God; yet bright to their eyes with his penetrating, all-pervasive glory, they have exhibited the universe as a picturesque adumbration in visible symbols of his invisible Godhead. Though not confounding the Maker with the things which he has made, they do not on this account shut out the Creator from his works, or represent him as a solitary potentate seated on an inaccessible throne amid the eternal silences, and casting only impassive glances on the empire he had reared. On the contrary, they represent him as every-where present, vivifying by his ubiquitous activity even the solitudes of remotest space—to us remote but to him near. And how animated is all nature when thus viewed, as luminous with his light, as vocal with his voice, as moved by his motive energy, and as sustained by his providence! Every sunbeam and star-ray, though not himself, is his shekinah. His voice rolls in the thunder and whispers in the breath of winds. The lightning is the flash of his ire. The rain-drops and the dew are sprinkled from out his bounteous hand. He rides on the chariot-clouds, and plants his footsteps on the sea. His children on the earth approach his footstool; while

a sparrow can not fall from the housetop, nor a sere leaf in Autumn drop from its withering bough, without his notice.

Nor is it only in their delineations of physical nature that the Scriptures exhibit a picturesqueness. Even abstract truth, taught as they teach it, by actual cases, rather than in naked formulæ, is vivified into pictorial reality; while in the views which the sacred writers give of Providence, there is a singularly-picturesque vividness. There are not wanting generalized statements, such as befit the lips of divine philosophy, when its oracle has to proclaim a theme so large. Aphorisms abound which might be inscribed on the choicest tablets to be set up in the highest niches of Wisdom's temple. Yet, along with these, we have picturesque touches, which to the eye of the simple ones exhibit a striking picture of a particular Providence. We are permitted almost to see with our bodily eyes the hand of the great Food-Giver opened to feed the fowls of the air and the young lions in the forest. We can all but perceive the eye of the Universal Protector, as it watches the fledgling sparrow, which is trying its young wings in its first flight. As we gaze on the lilies of the field, the words of the Savior do all but make visible to us the Divine pencil, which, dipped in dew-drops and sunshine, paints them so exquisitely beautiful. Also in its higher sphere the processes of Providence are set forth in a way which has all the effect of a magnificent picture. The

very elements, as if conscious of their Sovereign's will, are represented as waiting his summons to co-operate with him in his great works. The fitful waves, and the still more fitful winds; the heaving earthquake; the blazing meteor; the electric fire, as it flashes from the riven cloud; and even the very dreams, which shape their wild visions of the night, all are made to pass in the grand pageant which moves in Jehovah's train when he is accomplishing redemption work. Verily, one may scarcely call any thing common when thus the passing winds are represented as if uttering the name of Jesus; and the lightning's flash as if writing it in lines of fire on the sky; and the waves of ocean as if rolling it from pole to pole. Every sound, whether it be the zephyr's whisper or the tempest's roar; and every scene, whether in the smiling valley or on the cloud-covered mountain's brow; and every event, from the dropping of a leaf to the downfall of a kingdom, is sacred and solemn, when we think that by means of it the Redeemer may be carrying out his glorious work. And, as the pious reader kindles over these animating views of Providence, he can not repress the exclamation: "My Father, which art in heaven, do all thy works praise thee? do the stars in the firmament choir for thee their silent hymns? and for thee the thunder utter its voice? and for thee the lightning strike its fiery bolts? and for thee the winds blow, and the waters roll? is it even so, O Father? and shall not I, the creature of

thy bounty, the nursling of thy care, thy very child, be one among these ministers of thy pleasure, and one among these minstrels of thy praise?"

It may reasonably be asked why so large a portion of the Bible, which is professedly a book for all nations, has been taken up with topographical descriptions of Palestine? One purpose of this, we doubt not, was to render the Bible a picturesque and thus a pleasing volume to the lovers of natural scenery. But was this the sole purpose, or is there not a divine philosophy here? We apprehend there is. For we persuade ourselves that we can discover in the geographical picturesqueness of the Bible no small proof of its Divine origin. In the first place, its Author has thus shown himself to be acquainted with human nature in one of its universal instincts or sentiments. By the law of local associations, we can not help feeling a deep interest and curiosity to know about the land which was the theater of our redemption. We feel a desire to have set before us a vivid picture of its physical aspects—its streams, its mountains, its valleys, its cities; to have photographed, so to speak, to our mind's eye the exact spots in the wilderness where its patriarchs pitched their tents; the precise haunts of its ancient seers; the Temple where its congregations worshiped; and, above all, "the holy places" which were frequented by the Savior. The Author of the Bible, knowing this law in our nature, has made provision for it

by the Scriptures being so eminently topographical. For more than by Grecian poets the isles of the Ægean, by the Hebrew bards has Palestine, in its geographical features and remarkable localities, become a land familiar to the stranger.

But, further, may we not trace a beautiful harmony between the scenic picturesqueness of the Bible and its prophetic character? For, when the period of the expatriation shall have been completed, and the children of the exiles are restored to their fatherland, is the country of their sires to be to them as a strange country? When they are to be restored to their ancestral home shall it be to them as an alien land? Must the returned exiles sit down to weep, saying, We know not this place? Not so; for, though they have never visited it, with the Bible in their hands as their guide-book, they will recognize each sacred locality, and be able to trace the footsteps of their ancient sires. These local recognitions, linking at once into the chain of their historic memories, will make the returned exiles feel at home; with joy they will say, This is the land of our fathers.

CHAPTER IX.

HEBREW POETRY.

Among the *questiones vexatæ* in literature, few have been more keenly debated than, what is poetry? and what the function of the poet? Much of this disputation could have been avoided had our critics, instead of aiming at a single generalization, been content to specify particulars; since that which in its own nature is composite will not be described except by a composite definition; nor will any refinement of criticism succeed in reducing to a single conception that which combines several. Thus, when Aristotle defines poetry to be the mimetic or imitative art, he gives a definition which is neither distinctive nor exhaustive. It is not distinctive, seeing that painting and sculpture are as truly imitative arts as is poetry; nor is it exhaustive, since while imitation is one it is not the only property of poetry. So likewise those critics are at fault who define the province of poetry to be fiction; for while imagination and even pure fancy have much to do with the conceptions of the poet, many subjects proper to his art and which he is accustomed to discourse, so far from being fictitious, are of all realities the most real. Such are the works of God,

the sentiments of piety, and the passions of the human heart. Then with regard to the function of the poet, high authorities have pronounced it to be to please, while that of the historian and philosopher is to instruct. Now, unquestionably, poetry affords pleasure, both by the richer hues in which it dips its pen, by its peculiar phraseology, its rythmical construction, and its abundant figures; but while the vehicle in which the poet conveys his thoughts is peculiarly fitted to please, his aim, fully as much as that of the philosopher and historian, may be, and often is, to instruct and reform mankind.

What then is poetry? or, as we would prefer to put it—for who may define the ethereal art itself?—what are the attributes of the true poet? There is first that peculiar quickness of perception which we call the poetic eye, which "in a fine frenzy rolling" can detect not merely the ostensible, but also the occult forms and fashions of the beautiful and the sublime; then there is the poetic susceptiveness, or that undefinable excitability, by which objects, whether real or only present to the fancy, impress themselves or their images more vividly, more thrillingly, and more endurably, than the less delicate tissues of unpoetic minds will receive, at least at first sight and on a single glance; then there is the nervous system, both physical and mental, so finely threaded as to move in sympathy with every heart-throb of every living thing, and

to vibrate at every tender touch and every breathing sound of sadness or of joy, come whence these may, from far or near, from great things or small; there is also in a high state of activity the illustrative faculty, the true poet, having a keen insight into those analogies, which by links often too fine to be visible to ordinary observers, unite the various departments of nature, and so harmonize the processes in the material with those in the spiritual world, that to his eye not only is the invisible adumbrated or symbolized in the visible, but all nature appears one great parable; there is also in its highest degree of development the faculty of recombining the materials of perception, of memory, and meditative thought, till what rises to view is nothing short of a new creation; and finally there is a command of poetic language, or of words which have kindled with the poet's fervors, and which gleam with his fancies, and which he pours forth in streams of song, musical because his thoughts themselves are music.

Such we take to be the poetic talent; and the function of the true poet is to consecrate this talent to the elucidation and enforcement of truth, in those impressive and pleasing forms in which his lofty art enables him to clothe it.

Now, in the bards of the Bible, we find the poetic talent in the very highest degree; and in the poetry of the Bible we have the consecration of that talent to the noblest of all uses.

The first point which would naturally fall to be considered, is the structure or prosodial mechanism of Hebrew poetry. But on this subject I do not intend to dwell at length, and for two reasons. First, because, owing to the prosody—even the pronunciation of the Hebrew language being in a great measure lost—it is little else than a conjectural solution of the question which can now be reached; and, secondly, the critics have nevertheless so keenly maintained opposite opinions, that more space than our limits will allow would be required to give even a summary of the controversy.

Among the Greeks and the Romans the regular measure of poems was formed according to a law of syllabic quantity, or the *time* of pronouncing every line. Thus a hexameter verse, whatever the number of the syllables, was formed of six feet or measures, each containing two notes; and the words were so arranged that the same quantity of time should be regularly observed. This metrical construction, of course, required that the long or short syllables in every word in the language should be fixed; and the standard of notation was, that two short syllables were equivalent in time to one long syllable. But among the modern nations of Europe the meters are formed according to a law of accentuation—by accent being understood a particular stress or force of voice upon certain syllables of words, which distinguish them from the others. Thus an English hexameter consists of twelve syl-

lables, half of which are accented and the other unaccented. Another difference between the ancient and the modern poetry of Europe is, that in the latter—except in blank verse—the lines are rhymed, whereas in the former rhyme was unknown. Now, with respect to Hebrew poetry, it has been debated by the grammarians whether its versification followed the law of quantity, as among the ancients, or the law of accent, as among the moderns; or whether it had a law of rhythm differing from both of these, peculiar to itself.

Were the matter to be determined by the weight of names we might cite the highest authorities in support of the opinion that Hebrew versification had its fixed measures of time and quantity, as among the Greeks and Romans. Josephus, in the second book of his antiquities, expressly states that the Song of Moses, which celebrates the passage through the Red Sea, was composed in hexameters. In his fourth book of Antiquities he makes a similar statement concerning the sacred song in the 32d chapter of Deuteronomy; and in the seventh of the same work he expressly says: "And now David, being freed from wars and dangers, composed songs and hymns to God of several sorts of meter; some of those which he made were trimeters, and some were pentameters." Philo Judæus also states that Hebrew poetry had meters. Such also is the statement of Origen, Eusebius, Jerome, and Isidore. Sir William Jones, in a curious dissertation on Asiatic

meters, has shown that the lines of Arabic verses may be *scanned*, like those of the Greek. He then proceeds to show the probability that similar measures would be adopted by the Hebrews, whose language was a branch of the same Semitic family; and forms a theory of long and short syllables for Hebrew words, similar to those of the Arabic. He applies his theory, apparently with success, to the 28th chapter of Job, the Song of Solomon, some of the Psalms, the Lamentations of Jeremiah, the Song of Moses, the Song of Deborah, and the Elegy of David on the deaths of Saul and Jonathan. Besides the authority of names, we might plead the natural inclination to express the sentiments of poetry in measure; an inclination which a people so highly poetical, and so much addicted to the cultivation of poetry as were the Hebrews, can scarcely be supposed not to have indulged. We might further plead that *music* disposes to measures of different kinds. Now, it is well known that many of the Hebrew hymns were set to music; and few nations have reached a higher excellence in the art of minstrelsy than did the Hebrews, especially from the times of David and Solomon.

Still, what may be true of a few compositions may not be true of the general compositions of a people; and when we consider how little adapted, by its forms and construction, the Hebrew language is for those transpositions which verses of measured *time* require, we can not avoid the conclusion, that

for Hebrew poetry to have been confined to such modes of versification, would have been felt by the poets to have been irksome and unnatural. Besides, we meet with many specimens of poetic composition at a period so early as almost to preclude the supposition that the length or shortness of the syllables in the language could have then been so fixed as to admit of syllabic meters being very general.

While, therefore, it will scarcely deny, on the one hand, that specimens of verbal versification are not uncommon in Hebrew poetry; yet, on the other hand, it is just as obvious that this was not the proper or peculiar characteristic of its rhythm. What then was this characteristic?

To Bishop Lowth we owe the discovery of the true nature of the rhythm in Hebrew poetry. Its distinctive characteristic he has shown to consist in a correspondence of the lines, not, as in more modern languages, in sound, but in sense—in the recurrence of a regular measure dependent not on the quantity or length of syllables, but on the agreement of ideas. This correspondence he has denominated *parallelism*, which he defines to be "a certain equality, resemblance, or relationship between the members of each period; so that in one or more lines or members of the same period things shall answer to things, and words to words, as if fitted to each other by a kind of rule or measure." This new tract, which Lowth claims the honor to have opened, has been successfully pursued by subsequent investi-

gators. In our own country by Bishop Jebb, in his "Sacred Literature," and the Rev. T. Boys, in his "*Tactica Sacra*," and subsequently in his "Key to the Book of Psalms;" and in Germany by the learned Hebrew scholar Ewald. The latter, in place of "parallelism," adopted by Lowth, prefers the term "thought-rhythm."

Not attempting any thing beyond a short and simple account, which will best suit these pages, I would state the leading principle to be, that a simple verse or distich consists, both in regard to form and substance, of two corresponding members; and of this *parallelismus membrorum*, as it has been called, three kinds may be specified. First, there is the *synonymous parallelism* where the two members express the same thought in such manner that the second is an echo to the first, not in sense merely, but also in sound; for example:

> "What is man that thou art mindful of him,
> And the Son of man that thou carest for him?"
> Ps. viii, 4.

Sometimes the second member repeats only a part of the first:

> "Woe to them that join house to house,
> That field to field unite."
> Is. v, 8.

And sometimes the second member contains an expansion of the first:

> "Give to Jehovah, ye sons of God,
> Give to Jehovah glory and praise."
> Ps. xxix, 1.

The second kind is the *antithetic parallelism*, in which the first member is illustrated by some opposition of thought contained in the second:

"The full man treadeth the honeycomb under foot,
To the hungry every bitter thing is sweet."
Prov. xxii, 7.

"Day to day uttereth instruction,
And night to night sheweth knowledge."
Ps. xix, 2.

"They have bowed down and fallen,
But we have risen and stand upright."
Ps. xx, 8.

These two forms of parallelism are dependent on the two great laws of the association of ideas, resemblance and contrast. The third, which has been called the *synthetic*, by some the *constructive*, is founded simply upon a resemblance in the form of construction and progression of the thoughts; the second member not being a mere echo, or reduplication of the first, subjoins something new to it, while the same structure of the verse is preserved—thus:

"He appointeth the moon for seasons,
The sun knoweth his going down."
Ps. civ, 19.

"The law of Jehovah is perfect, reviving the soul;
The precepts of Jehovah are pure, instructing the simple."
Ps. xix, 7.

There is a fourth kind of parallelism which Bishop Jebb has styled the *introverted*: "There are stanzas so constructed that whatever be the number of lines, the first line shall be parallel with the

last, the second with the penultimate, and so throughout, in an order which looks inward, or, to borrow a military phrase, from flanks to center. This may be called the *introverted* parallelism.

> "The idols of the heathen are silver and gold,
> The work of men's hands:
> They have mouths but they speak not;
> They have eyes but they see not;
> They have ears but they hear not;
> Neither is there any breath in their mouths:
> They who make them are like unto them:
> So are all they who put their trust in them."
>
> Ps. cxxxv, 15–18.

Here the first line introverts with the eighth—in the one we have the idols of the heathen, in the other those who put their trust in idols. The second line introverts with the seventh—in the one is the fabrication, in the other the fabricators. The third line introverts with the sixth—in the one there are mouths without articulation, in the other mouths without breath. The fourth line introverts with the fifth, where the introverted parallelism may be said to unite its two halves in a parallelism of synthesis—eyes without vision, ears without the sense of hearing.

The simple, two-membered rhythm is the more common; but not unfrequently verses occur with three, four, or yet more members, and in these the parallelisms exhibit considerable variety. In the *tristich*, for example, the members are sometimes all three parallel; sometimes two of the members

stand opposed to the third. In the *quartette* we find at one time two simple parallels, at another time a kind of semi-introverted parallel, the first and third answering to each other, also the second and fourth. By a combination of the various sorts, several being found together in one composition, great freedom, ease, and capability is given to the style.

Before proceeding to enumerate some of the characteristics which prove the superior excellence of Hebrew poetry, it is right that the reader be apprized of two special disadvantages under which, owing to the accidents of time and language, that poetry labors.

First, then, while the melody and rhythmical flow of numbers is not essential to poetry; yet these greatly help its full effect. But from such aids Hebrew poetry can now derive very little, if, indeed, any aid at all. What may have been its prosodial structure is, as we have seen, a point upon which the learned are still divided. But whether its cadence was owing to the arrangement of the syllables according to their quantity or their accent, or was the effect of a certain parallelism, or the iteration of the thought in balanced or parallel members, it is obvious that—since not only the prosody, but even the pronunciation of the Hebrew language is in a great measure lost—in reading its poetry even our most skilled Hebraists can do but

scant justice to the harmonic arrangement of the words. We are able to scan and correctly intone the odes of Horace; but the lyrics of Isaiah we can neither scan nor intone so as to give them the proper metrical effect. Whatever, therefore, may have been the prosodial structure of Hebrew poetry, one thing is certain, that very different from what they are, as read by us, must have been the Psalms of Moses, Asaph, and David, when, set to music, they were sung or chanted in the choral services of the Temple.

The other great disadvantage under which Hebrew poetry labors is, that by the ordinary reader it can be judged of only from translations. Now even in prose—in poetry of course still more so—the finer shades of thought, in being transfused into another language, lose much of their force and beauty; just as of volatile odors much of the aroma evaporates when they are poured into a new vessel. And, moreover, while the great poets of Greece and Rome have had the good fortune to be translated by great poets, the bards of Palestine have not yet been so fortunate. Dryden and Pope, the translators of Virgil and Homer, were unquestionably poets; but one would hesitate to say as much of Sternhold and Hopkins, or of Tate and Brady, or of Francis Rous.

Those who, by their talents and scholarship, were qualified to be judges, have not hesitated to award

the superiority to Hebrew over Greek and Latin poetry. Sir Daniel Sandford, whose classic taste none will dispute, has pronounced his opinion in the following terms: "That any one who has studied the poetry, history, and philosophy of the Hebrews, even merely as specimens of composition, should lightly esteem them, is impossible. In lyric flow and fire, in crushing force, in majesty that seems still to echo the awful sounds once heard beneath the thunder-clouds of Mount Sinai, the poetry of the ancient Scriptures is the most superb that ever burned within the breast of man." Even Milton, who, of all our poets, will be least suspected of underrating the ancient classics, leaves no doubt of the comparative estimate he had formed between them and the bards of the Bible; as witness the following passage which he has put into the mouth of Christ himself:

"Or, if I would delight my private hours
With music or with poem, where, so soon
As in our native language, can I find
That solace? All our law and story strewed
With hymns, our psalms with artful terms inscribed,
Our Hebrew songs and harps, in Babylon,
That pleased so well our victor's ear, declare
That rather Greece from us their art derived;
Ill imitated, while they loudest sing
The vices of their deities, and their own,
In fable, hymn, or song, so personating
Their gods ridiculous, and themselves past shame.
Remove their swelling epithets, thick laid
As varnish on a harlot's cheek, the rest
Thin sown with aught of profit or delight,
Will far be found unworthy to compare

> With Zion's songs, to all time tastes exalting
> Where God is praised aright, and God-like men
> The Holiest of Holies, and his saints—
> Such are from God inspired, not such from thee—
> Unless where moral virtue is expressed
> By light of nature, not in all quite lost."

Were then the Hebrew bards possessed of higher poetical talent, or had they attained to greater metrical skill than the Grecian and Roman poets? We scarcely presume to say so; but will rather own that in point of natural genius and acquired culture they were inferior. It must also be admitted that in form and variety the ancient classic poetry surpasses the Hebrew. Yet in substance—in the thoughts and the themes—the latter is incomparably superior. It draws its inspiration from a source which was inaccessible to other ancient literatures; and dwells in a region, pure, serene, truthful, and religious, to which they could not attain. Could Homer, for example, have chosen a divine theme, and had he been divinely inspired, then Homer would probably have been the first among sacred, as he is confessedly the first among profane poets. But wanting both these, the mere force of genius, high as it carried his muse, could not bear her up to those supernal hights where the Hebrew muse had planted her footsteps on celestial light. The poets of Greece might be compared to one of its own eagles soaring from its mist-capped eyrie on Mount Parnassus toward the sun—its dank wings half reflecting, half absorbing the incident rays;

while the poets of Palestine are as an eagle darting downward from the sun, its wings so steeped in light direct from the solar font, that they continue to illumine the rock of Horeb or Sinai, on which it perches with a halo of supernatural glory.

And yet, though divine, how instinct with human sentiments is the Hebrew poetry. It throbs with all natural sympathies, pulsates with the joys and the sorrows, the hopes and the fears, which are universal to humanity. Celestial born, it nevertheless owns the sisterhood of the muses; is passionate or plaintive; wreathed in smiles or bathed with tears; crowns itself with the laurel, the olive, or the cypress; lifts its voice to the lively tones of the timbrel and dulcimer, or sinks it to the dirge-notes of the solemn harp—according as it yields itself to the varying moods and emotions of our human nature. The glorious hymn of victory which Moses sang, and Miriam echoed back, on the shores of the Red Sea, utters in every line the natural sentiments of gratitude. The elegiac strains of Jeremiah, tear-steeped in the prophet's own sorrow, touch a responsive sadness wherever a true patriot beholds his country forlorn and desolate. The heart-bursts of penitence which came from the trembling strings of David's lyre are felt by every Christian who mourns his backslidings, as if the strings of that lyre were those of his own breast.

No poetry could be more truly human than this same poetry, which is truly divine. And this com-

posite character—its literal humanity and its literal divinity—we give as the first distinctive feature of Hebrew poetry, because to it alone it belongs.

Another composite character of Hebrew poetry which I would instance is, that while intensely national, it is yet of no nation—while strictly local it nevertheless belongs to no locality. On taking up the Psalms of David, composed as they were in the first instance to furnish a Psalter for Palestine, you find them in their structure, their sentiments, their imagery, their entire cast of thought, and historic allusions, unmistakably Jewish. For whether in martial ode the nation celebrates its victories, or in sacred hymn the poet pours forth his own individual emotions, you feel that you are listening to Jews. Indeed no poetry could bear a deeper or broader mark of nationality. The country, the climate, the customs, the peculiar religious institutions, rites, and ceremonies, and the unique history of the Israelites, are all so faithfully and vividly reflected in the Hebrew poetry, that there is no mistaking any one song for a poem of any other people. And yet these songs have touched a chord which at this day continues to vibrate through the bosom of the universal brotherhood. The hymnologist of the East has been confessed to be the sacred poet of the West. The Psalter of the Jewish Temple has been adopted as the Psalter of the Christian Church. The Hebrew lyre has been tuned by Gentile nations to the same olden themes; to the

self-same olden words which breathed from its strings in the days of David.

But how happens it that a poetry which is so national has been adopted by all nations—that hymns which are so epochal possess such perennial interest? I reply, this can only be because the Hebrew poetry has been drawn, as all true poetry ever is, from the deep well of those imperishable feelings which belong to no one country, or people, or age; but to all ages, and all peoples, and all countries, because to mankind.

Thus has the Hebrew muse accomplished what no other muse has ever been able to do—it has in its primitive hymns given articulate expression to the religious feelings and experiences of universal posterity.

Another characteristic feature of Hebrew poetry, closely associated with the former, is, that while it is of the East yet it essentially differs from the general type of Eastern poetry. A gorgeous imagery, inflated epithets, and extravagant figures, characterize the poetry of the East. In these children of the sun, imagination, like the gardens of their tropical clime, would seem to put forth flowers of excessive luxuriance. But the poetry of the Bible, though steeped in Eastern warmth, is distinguished by great simplicity, artlessness, and genuine feeling. Instead of the pomp of Oriental grandeur, its images are generally taken from Nature in her simplest forms; and those figures which are derived

from local objects are usually of a kind with which men of every age and country can easily sympathize. As was to be expected in a poetry so genuine, you perceive a reflex copy of objective nature; the deep, rich coloring, along with the ample ornate foliation of Eastern flora, being transferred to the pages of the Hebrew bards. Yet not like other Oriental poetry does theirs copy what is merely topical, or paint in colors which exceed those of nature. It is a faithful transcript; but a transcript which is softened and subdued; breathing rather the spirit than affecting to copy the forms of Nature in her luxuriant climes. And the reason of this is not difficult to perceive. The sacred poets could not be natives of the East and not exhibit an Oriental cast of thought and expression; but from their possessing a truer appreciation of Nature, they have penetrated beneath local and climatal varieties to her deeper characteristics; and by transferring these to their poetry, have made it of universal significance. Then, besides this, the greatness and sacredness of their themes have toned down the Oriental hues of their poetry; while a wider breadth has been imparted to it by the consciousness which they must have felt that their mission was to universalize the poetry of their nation, as God's chosen vehicle by which to convey sacred truth to the latest generations of our scattered race.

Another characteristic of Hebrew poetry is its

originality. This is owing to two causes—its extreme antiquity and the uniqueness of its themes. It is the most archaic of all poetries. Standing nearer than any other to the first days of creation, it fell to it to be the first to sing creation's hymn. And how greatly sublimer every way is the muse which has sung of the origin of worlds, and of the race, than those which, by the aid of fable and invention, have attempted to trace the rise of a nation or the birth of a single people. The hero of ancient Hebrew poetry was no Æneas—the founder of a particular dynasty; but the first man—the primal father of the race. It has justly been asked, "Homer had his teachers, but who taught Moses?" Hebrew song had indeed no pattern to copy from—no older muse than itself to imitate. It is essentially and entirely original—self-educed, self-developed. It is no exotic transplanted from some sunnier clime. No warp crossed into a foreign woof. No echo of an older minstrelsy. Other poesies have sprung from that of Palestine; but it sprang from none. The first of vocal streams, it issued direct from its fountains in the depths of nature, when these were filled by the inspiration of God. Other bards may borrow and imitate—the bards of the Bible lend and create.

Another marked characteristic of Hebrew poetry is its profound *religiousness*. All true poetry in its higher forms is religious; for it is the impassioned utterances of the soul when it is seeking after, or

when having found, it stands confronted with the highest perfection, either actual or ideal. If only ideal, then poetry is simply the apotheosis in song of the amplified conceptions of the soul itself. But when the poet stands in the presence of the actual divinity—the all-good, the all-beautiful, the all-true—then his song becomes instinct with ideas which are above and beyond his own; and is animated with a fire which has descended from an altar which is higher than that of his muse. Now in the Hebrew poetry it is the actual, not the ideal, divine which is celebrated. The bards of Palestine stood in the immediate presence of the Jehovah—they heard his voice—they listened to the echoes of his footsteps—they looked upon his awful symbols—beheld the miracles of his power—and received his inspiration. Hence a divine and imperishable power is in all their songs; and their poetry, more than that of all other nations, is characterized by its pure, and rich, and living religious element.

It rings and rolls through the ages as one continuous hymn of praise to the Creator and the Redeemer, God. It is the one grand psalm of piety, many-voiced, yet ever the same choral symphony. At first you listen to it, faintly breaking on the ear, as if it were the caught-up echoes of those music-notes which the sons of the morning had raised in creation's hymn; till, deepening and widening, like the river in its flow, you hear it pour a fuller minstrelsy as it seems to mingle with the heavenly choirs.

In what mood or frame can devotion be when it shall not find articulate expression to its thoughts and its feelings in the sacred hymns of Israel? What emotions, joyous or mournful, would it pour forth in vocal utterance, for which it shall not find the appropriate words in the Psalms of David? Is there an inmost chord which he has not touched?—a condition of the religious consciousness which he has not anticipated?—a single pent-up feeling of devotion, which with him as its interpreter needs now to be voiceless? The lofty aspiration, the winged hope, the weeping contrition, the grateful thanksgiving, the wishful supplication, the broad human sympathy, the devout sentiment, have all been articulated by him in the language of sacred poetry.

Another distinctive feature of Hebrew poetry is its *spontaneousness*. Open the Psalter at any part, you find streams of song pouring forth as the brooks and water-falls which gush down the mountains of Palestine after the latter rain. Not more free was the murmur of the winds through the cedar forests of Lebanon, than is the music of David's song. As the trees of Eden, so does this tree of sacred song seem to bourgeon and to blossom, while there was not a man to till the ground. All is ease, freedom, naturalness. There is no constraint, no effort, no affectation, seemingly no art. The heart was full, and being full overflowed in spontaneous song.

The last distinctive feature of Hebrew poetry

which I shall mention is its great range and variety of subject. With imperial eye the sacred muse looked out on flood and field—on land and ocean—on earth and sky—on the starry night and the sunlit day—on the quiet pastures and the battle-field—on the bowers of love and the bier of death—on the solitary haunts of the crowded city—on the king's palace and the shepherd's tent: she beheld infancy, manhood, old age; grief, joy, hope, despair; time and eternity—death and immortality—heaven and hell: all forms she saw, all passions, all beings, all things visible and invisible; all periods past, present, and to come: these all her eye beheld and scanned, and weaving her visions into song, she has left to remotest generations the gathered treasures of her universal poesy.

CHAPTER X.

HEBREW POETRY—CONTINUED.

With regard to the forms of poetry, it must be confessed that there is not the same variety among the Hebrews as is to be found among the Greeks, the Romans, and even the nations of India. For while the epic and the drama, the two highest styles so far as mere art is concerned, were cultivated successfully by these, among the Israelites we find only their germs or first rudiments. But as we shall see, this might arise from other causes than the want of the requisite literary cultivation. Indeed, we can not look upon the attempts which have been made to find the regular epic and drama in the Hebrew poetry otherwise than as betraying the want of a just appreciation of its true character.

An epic poem requires an heroic age sufficiently remote to enable the poet to found upon its traditions, which by his time have fallen into that degree of obscurity which leaves him at full liberty to mix poetic fable with historical facts. While it thus allows the poet to adorn his subject by means of fiction, antiquity is also favorable to those high and august ideas which epic poetry is designed to raise, since it tends to aggrandize, in our imagination,

both persons and events. If the epoist chooses his subject within any period of history with which we are intimately acquainted, he will either be wanting in grandeur, or appear extravagant. We have an instance of this in [Lucan] and Voltaire, who have both unwisely attempted to bring the epic muse within the verge of real and authenticated history. The former, in his *Pharsalia*, by confining himself to strict historical truth, has rendered his story jejune; while the latter, in his *Henriade*, asserting more liberty, has mingled the true and the fictitious in a manner which is utterly incongruous and grotesque. Homer, it is true, selected a subject which was not so very remote from his own times, for he lived, as is generally believed, only two or three centuries after the Trojan war. But at that early age, through the want of written records, tradition would more rapidly fall into the degree of obscurity most proper for epic poetry.

Let us now advert to the Hebrew history, from which, of course, whatever is historical in Hebrew poetry had to be taken. We shall not find that history wanting in an heroic age; for such unquestionably was the patriarchal age; such also was that of the judges; and such, in its earlier period, that of the monarchy. Not in these epochs of Hebrew history were wanting the elements for epic song. Heroic deeds worthy to be immortalized—wonderful events rising into the miraculous—a pilgrim march of forty years through the sterile wilderness—the

tread, the toils, the havoc of war, when a single people, aided by Heaven, overthrew the multitudinous hosts of Philistia, Moab, Bashan, Media, and Canaan—the foundations of a great nation laid amid marvels of human prowess and portents from heaven—the establishment of a worship which to a gorgeous ritual united a pure faith, and which, ere it could yet boast the most magnificent Temple ever reared to religion, was imposing in its simple tabernacle of curtains—a chivalry which raised herdsmen into heroes, made tender youths vie with long-trained veterans, and taught gentle maidens, laying aside the timbrel, to seize the sword, forgetful of their weakness in avenging their country's wrongs. If the epic muse essays to sing of heroism, here were heroes—if to recite some illustrious enterprise, here were many such—if with high sentiments to warm our hearts, here were the very highest—if by crowning virtuous characters with her immortal verse, to excite our admiration and provoke us to imitate them, here were characters worthy to be thus crowned—if beside the altar to consecrate song by the solemnities of devotion, here was the purest altar and here the noblest fane.

How then, with her history so full of the heroic element, has Palestine no epic? Is the reason why she can boast no Iliad that she gave birth to no Homer? If this was the case, then we shall have to admit that her bards were unequal to the highest form of poetry. But we take the reason to have

been, not any weakness in their poetic genius, but rather that, guided by its correct intuitions, they perceived that their national history was not suitable for the epos. There was too much of truth and reality in its heroic age to admit of poetic fiction. Moses, the historian and also poet, might justly claim to have written a prose epic; but it must be by the poet of another land that the rich materials which the Pentateuch supplies were to be woven into poetic fictions. The son of Amram lived too near the realities, was too much an actor in the most remarkable of them, for himself to have chronicled them in epic song. The same thing might be said of David, Israel's second great poet, with reference to its third heroic age—the early period of the monarchy. Nor might Palestine's epic be written by any of its later poets; for the wonderful events which made up its earlier history being preserved in written records, did not, like the early histories of other nations, assume the legendary form; nor did it degenerate into mythology, or pass from the truthfulness which was its essence; but retained through all periods its character of earnest, lofty, and impressive reality. Instead, therefore, of the circumstance of Hebrew poetry containing no epic being taken as an indication that the Hebrew poets were unequal to this highest form of poetry, it ought rather to be received as evidence that they had the just appreciation of the conditions under which it is proper for the poet to attempt this de-

partment of his art. They found no earlier history of other lands worthy of epic commemoration; and the history of their own land was too grand a reality to be mixed with fiction. Yet must they have been conscious, that though not in form, yet in spirit, their poetry and often their prose was highly epical; and mayhap at times in one of those visions which genius, with its forecasting glances, has of distant futurities, they would surmise that some great poet, born in another clime, might yet turn to their pages to seek for the materials out of which to form the foundation, and in no small measure the fabric of his sacred epic. Such, at all events, has proved to be the case. And so long as the *Paradise Lost* survives, besides being a monument of our Milton's genius, it will equally be a proof that though Moses wrote no epic poem, his Pentateuch presents the richest materials for one.

In the New Testament, also, Milton found materials for the epic; and the subject which he has selected for his "Paradise Regained" might be taken as a confirmation of our statement that, by the peculiarities of their national history, the sacred poets felt themselves shut out from epic song. The question which Milton had to decide was, which part of the Savior's life was it best to select as that in which paradise was regained. Some have been of opinion that he should have taken the crucifixion, which was the crowning and decisive event in our Lord's history, and where the poet would have

had a much wider field than in the temptation. But Milton had a truer perception of the conditions of the epos. The crucifixion is narrated in full detail by the four Evangelists; if Milton had modified, or in any way altered their narrative, he would have shocked the religious sense of all Christians; yet the structure of an epic poem would often require that he should so modify them. With a fine sense of this difficulty, he chose the narrow basis of the temptation in the wilderness, because the whole had been wrapped up by Scripture in a few obscure abstractions, which the poet could expand into epical pictures without offense to the nicest religious scruple.

None of the Hebrew poets can be said to be dramatists in the sense in which we would apply that term to Euripides or Shakspeare. There is no comedy, of course, in the sacred volume; but neither is there formal tragedy. This absence of the drama, we apprehend, was not owing to a want of the requisite literary cultivation, but is rather to be accounted for by the religious earnestness of the Hebrews; the solemnity of the subjects with which they had to do in their literary productions, and the vivid reality with which even the most primitive events in their national history continued to abide in the memory of the people. Like the epic, though not in equal degree, the drama affects antiquity; at least it prefers to retire behind the fresh footprints of more recent history, because

there it can lead us along the dimmer and more winding by-paths of tradition, which, as the foster-mother of fiction, prepares materials for the poet's hand, and will not witness against him, when he gives them a still more fictitious form. A legendary history, with its outline of facts which the poet's fancy can fill up, is essential to the drama. But a legendary history was wanting to the Hebrews. Their sacred books so preserved the national chronicles, that, after the lapse of centuries, any incidents which their poets could have dramatized had all the fresh vividness of cotemporaneous events. And this we take to be the true cause of the absence of the formal drama in Hebrew poetry. Yet there are not wanting abundant elements for the drama; nor can we fail to trace its rudimentary outlines. In the Song of Solomon several *dramatis personæ* can be discovered speaking and acting. In the book of Job the dramatic element of the Hebrew muse is developed in a still more marked form, and a more decided degree. And we know not which to admire most in this admirable production, the great boldness with which the poet has introduced the machinery—the contrivances and even the plot of the drama—or his strong self-restraint in confining these within those limits which the imagination, warming with its theme, might have overstepped, unless chastened by deep religious feeling.

But if Hebrew poetry is wanting in the epical and the dramatic, it is peculiarly rich in the lyrical.

In its stricter acceptation lyric poetry is such as is sung to the harp or lyre. It was greatly cultivated by the ancients, among whom Anacreon, Alcæus, Sappho, and Horace are distinguished as lyric poets. In modern times the epithet has been transferred to all kinds of verse partaking in any degree of the same nature as that to which it was first applied. The predominance of feeling is what chiefly distinguishes a lyric composition, the poet being supposed either directly to express his own emotions, or to clothe the emotions of others in appropriate expression.

The lyric poetry of the Hebrews embraced a great variety of topics; from the shortest and most fleeting effusion, to the loftiest subjects, treated in a full and detailed manner. It was also composed for a variety of occasions, as when some great national event was to be commemorated; likewise for set holiday seasons, when it formed a part of the national worship. Not unfrequently it was used by individual worshipers on presenting their thank-offerings; nor alone within the precincts of the Temple, but in the palace and the shepherd's tent, on the battle-field, among the palm-groves and the pasture-fields, was heard the Hebrew lyre; for whatever the occasion, the Hebrews were a people whose emotions seemed to find spontaneous utterance in song. The lyric music of Palestine ran equally through all the moods of the human soul, nothing being too lowly, too deep, or too high for

it. Softly and sweetly it could sing of the benign effects of brotherly love; with burning raptures, yet less vehement than Sappho's, it has given expression to the lover's passion. It uttered its wail over the bier of death, and threw its graceful imagery over the nuptial couch. It lisped in numbers for the children, and poured forth its divine philosophy for the sage. It told how the horse and the Egyptian rider were sunk in the depth of the sea; and with plaintive penitence confessed the frequent backslidings of God's favored people. It lingered round the roses of Sharon, with their fragrance to perfume the breath of music; and it soared, as on eagle wing, into the hights of the sky, to borrow luster from its orbs.

Of the several species of the lyric, the most common were the "Hymn," or "Psalm of Praise," and the "Dirge," or "Song of Sorrow."

Of the hymn, or ode, it is needless to give examples; the reader has only to turn up the Hebrew Psalter, where he will find abundance of both kinds of this composition—that which is sometimes called the less ode, which is characterized by sweetness and ease; and that also which is known as the greater ode, whose characteristics are sublimity, rapture, and quickness of transition. The ode, or hymn of praise, had its origin in victory, deliverance, the reception of bounties, and generally those happy events and auspicious occasions which excited the soul to joy and gladness, and were celebrated

with music, often accompanied with dancing, in the public assemblies of the people, or after a more solemn manner in the sacred courts of the Temple. The very peculiar history of the Hebrew nation—their notable deliverances, as in their exodus from Egypt; their frequent victories; the manifold divine favors bestowed upon their land; their rare social and ecclesiastical privileges; the brilliance of their early monarchy; their illustrious roll of heroes, of prophets, and princes, furnished abundant materials for the lyric hymn, which broke out so frequently in pæans of victory and thanksgiving, both in the tents of Israel and in her Temple and her palaces.

Of elegiac poetry many very beautiful specimens occur in the Scriptures. David's lament over Saul and Jonathan is so perfect an example of the elegy that I can not refrain from quoting it in full:

" The gazelle, O Israel, has been cut down on thy hights;
How are thy mighty fallen!

Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon,
Lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice,
Lest the daughters of the uncircumcised exult.

Hills of Gilboa, no dew nor rain come upon your devoted fields!
For there is stained the heroes' bow,
Saul's bow never anointed with oil.

From the blood of the slain, from the fat of the mighty,
The bow of Jonathan turned not back,
And the sword of Saul came not idly home.

Saul and Jonathan! lovely and pleasant in life!
And in death ye are not divided;
Swifter than eagles, stronger than lions!

Ye daughters of Israel! weep for Saul;
He clothed you delicately in purple,
He put ornaments of gold on your apparel.

How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle!
O Jonathan, slain in thy high places!

I am distressed for thee, brother Jonathan!
Very pleasant wast thou to me;
Wonderful was thy love, more than the love of woman.

How are the mighty fallen,
And the weapons of war perished!"

Pope's elegy on an unfortunate lady has been justly admired, and a still higher praise has been bestowed on Gray's elegy; but we venture to claim for David's lament an incomparable superiority over either of these, excellent as they confessedly are. They will not once compare with it in natural metaphor, in vehemence of emotion, in tenderness of sorrow, or in simple beauty of expression. They want that occasional ruggedness which marks the language of deep grief; they run on too smoothly for its choked utterances; do not alternate sufficiently between rapidity and repose, with its varying moods; and are without the freshness of a sorrow newly steeped in tears. The flowers which Pope strews upon the bier of unfortunate beauty, instead of being dropped as from a trembling hand, are artistically disposed after the manner of a decorator. The polished stanzas of Gray, in place of drenching tears, are spangled with metaphors which look too much like gems set by a lapidary. With the English poets there is an excess of fancy, and a

great deal too much of art; whereas the Hebrew bard, as befits the elegiac muse, is all feeling and nature. Several of the Psalms, composed on occasions of distress and mourning, are in the elegiac style. The forty-second Psalm, in particular, is in the highest degree tender and plaintive, presenting us with what may be termed a spiritual elegy, when, in dirge-like strain, a forlorn soul laments its being denied access to God in his sanctuary.

But chief among the Hebrew elegists is Jeremiah. His Lamentations present the most regular and perfect elegiac composition. As the prophet mourns over the destruction of the Temple and the holy city, and the overthrow of the whole State, nothing could exceed for dirge-like grandeur, his melancholy strains; and the images which he assembles are of the most affecting description. Put together and united in one book, executed with consummate skill, yet natural, and unrestrained as is the voice of sorrow, these Lamentations present an altogether unique specimen of writing, which indeed could have had its birth no where but in a Hebrew soul; and could have been poured forth over no other land than that of Israel. Only on the fall and ruin of Jerusalem could sorrow have raised these so sad wailings, or patriotism have shed these so melancholy tears. The great grief of the prophet is justified by its cause. The mind of Jeremiah was of a soft and delicate texture; by nature he was mild and retiring, highly susceptible and sensitive, especially to

sorrowful emotions. Such a one, under the influence of divine energy, was peculiarly fitted to wake the solemn harp to the dirges of sorrow and lamentation. The strength of his anguish makes it sublime. His poetry has all the majesty of a sorrow which will not be comforted, yet it withdraws not into austere seclusion, but moved by an irrepressible sympathy with the miserable, it finds utterance in the most touching descriptions of their condition. His is not a selfish grief, which weeps merely to fill its own bitterness with tears; but moved by pity, he exhibits the objects of his song as objects of sympathy, and founds his expostulations on the miseries which he exhibits. His book of Lamentations is an astonishing exhibition of his power to accumulate images of sorrow. Through this series of elegies one object only is present to his muse—the expression of grief for the forlorn condition of his country; and yet he so shifts the lights and shadows, has such a diversity of figures, that not only are his mournful strains not felt to be tedious reiterations, but the reader is captivated by the plaintive melancholy which pervades the whole.

Others of the Hebrew poets have left us specimens of the elegy, which though briefer than Jeremiah's, are admirable of their kind. With what dirge-like grandeur David has sorrowed over the misfortunes of Israel, as in Ps. xliv, lx, lxxiii! So also have Ezek., xxvii, xxxii, and Is. i, xxi, mourned over the desecration or the destruction of the holy city.

Of didactic poetry we have a splendid specimen in the Book of Proverbs, where the poet tears away the tinsel mask, and brands the uncovered brow of Vice as with a searing iron, while he adorns Virtue with her own pure loveliness, and strings upon her virgin robes the Oriental pearls of Eastern poetry; with a satire two-edged and keen are mingled the grave sagacity of the sage, the elegance of the finished scholar, the profound maxims of the philosopher, and reflections on human life and characters, which show the accurate observer and astutious moralist. The Book of Ecclesiastes, by the same author, is another example of the didactic species of poetry. In this remarkable piece, the satire of the poet seems for a time to indulge itself in burning scorn and biting sarcasm: flinging withered leaves on the footsteps of Summer, strewing the path of memory with ashes, and closing the vista of hope with gloom; but ere long the satirist is forgotten in the sage, whose more genial utterances fall like reviving showers on the experiences which satire with its hot breath had scorched and blighted, when all is not left to seem a wilderness, but one spot at least is spared, where, as in a bower of beauty and peace and pleasure, Virtue can dwell with Hope, serene and secure. Hence the effect which the first portion of this poem might produce on some minds, by fostering a miserable or mocking cynicism, is admirably counteracted in the closing portions; and the entire piece, by the poet's felici-

tous use of contrast, forms one of the noblest specimens of a didactic poem.

Pastoral poetry, as might be expected from the pastoral habits of the Israelites, is very plentiful in their poetical books; and their sweet singer, having himself, in his youth, tended the flocks, did not when he had reached his regal estate forget to touch his harp to pastoral strains, as witness especially the 23d Psalm. The Book of Ruth is an exquisite bit of rural description—a charming Idyllian picture throughout.

I could willingly linger with the sacred poets, in an attempt to give a critical analysis of their several styles and methods, and to institute a comparison between them and the poets of other lands. But besides my conscious inability to do justice to such a task, another consideration restrains me. This is a branch of sacred literature which has been largely treated by abler pens; I shall therefore content myself with referring the reader who wishes for full information to such writers as Lowth, Ewald, Herder, Noyes, and Jebb; while those who have not leisure to peruse these erudite works will find the subject treated in a more popular form, yet with great acumen and eloquence, in Gilfillan's "Bards of the Bible."

CHAPTER XI.

THE HISTORICAL IN THE SCRIPTURES.

After what has been said under the head of the "Picturesque," I do not know that I have any thing more to add respecting the style and outward structure of the sacred histories. In their method and design there are certain peculiarities which merit a few observations.

The question, What is history? like the question, What is poetry? has given rise to a good deal of discussion, which repeated attempts at definition can hardly be said to have settled. That history has a higher function than simply to furnish a bare register of events, or a book of annals, or a chronological table, is now universally admitted. On facts every veracious history of course is founded; but if there be only these, then you have merely the bones, or at best the bones and the flesh, while the spirit is wanting. What then is that vital principle by which the historian shall animate the materials of past ages? Some have sought for it in the vivacity which can be imparted to a narrative by picturesque description and artistic grouping. Others have sought in philosophy the principle which should impart life to their labors, with their narra-

tive of events having interwoven instructive lessons, political and philosophical truths, and enlarged views of human nature and social progress. That the embellishments of literature and the expositions of philosophy communicate a measure of life to history we readily admit, but we can not think that its real life has to be infused into it from extraneous sources, or by mechanical aids. We believe it to have life in itself—an inborn vitality—a spirit of its own which, if the historian shall seize it, will impart to his pages the warm breath which it breathes. A history which is only vivified by the aids of literature and philosophy does not appear to us to resemble a dead body while under the action of the galvanic current: there is the movement of the limbs, but it is after all the spasms of death; the mouth opens, but there is no living voice; the eyelids lift, but vision is not there.

What, then, if not literature or philosophy, is the spirit, the intelligence, the life of past ages? We reply, "It is religion." The life of history is God; and only in so far as he is acknowledged and proclaimed in the events which are narrated shall these events be living history.

"Do not those revolutions," asks D'Aubigné, "which hurl kings from their thrones, and precipitate whole nations to the dust—do not those widespread ruins which the traveler meets with among the sands of the desert—do not those majestic relics which the field of humanity presents to our view—

do they not all proclaim aloud *a God in history?* Gibbon, seated among the ruins of the capitol, and contemplating its august remains, owned the intervention of a superior destiny. He saw it, he felt it; in vain would he avert his eyes. That shadow of a mysterious power started from behind every broken pillar; and he conceived the design of describing its influence in the history of the disorganization, decline, and corruption of that Roman dominion which had enslaved the world. Shall not we discern amid the great ruins of humanity that Almighty Hand, which a man of noble genius—one who had never bent the knee to Christ—perceived amid the scattered fragments of the monuments of Romulus, the sculptured marbles of Aurelius, the busts of Cicero and Virgil, the statues of Cæsar and Augustus, Pompey's horses, and the trophies of Trajan, and shall we not confess it to be the hand of God?"

If, then, God is the life of history, of all histories that which we find in the sacred Scriptures has the most life. Every page is vitalized; for on every page the historian constantly keeps in view a personal God, and a special Providence. A high authority has said, "History is philosophy teaching by example." The Scripture histories suggest a loftier aphorism—history is Providence teaching by example.

But the sacred historians present God in history not merely to a greater extent than profane histori-

ans are wont to do, but in a sense altogether peculiar to themselves. Every true historian, while reciting the actions of men and of nations; while tracing the vicissitudes of empires; while memorizing the conflicts and collisions out of which, as with violent throes, peace and progress have been born; and while following the footsteps of those great men who, springing from society at their appointed epochs, have communicated a fresh impulse to their generation, which, passing down the channel of centuries, exerts an influence on the destiny of the race; while doing this, the true historian will strive to keep before his own mind, and the minds of his readers, that in all these God is ever present; that, whether it be nations or individuals, the conflicts of war or the arts of peace, the rise or the fall of kingdoms, a single generation or many successive generations of men, God's footprints may be traced, and the working of his hand be seen, on the vast theater where all, though few of them may wot of it, are the instruments by which his great designs are being accomplished. Every true historian, I say, will do this. But the sacred historians do more than this. For it has fallen to them not merely to proclaim a Divine Providence in history, when God acts through subordinate agents, each, as used by him, performing their several acts in the grand drama, but also to record the immediate operations of God, when, dispensing with subordinate instrumentalities, he has

made bare his arm in the sight of all the nations. In ordinary history, though present, God is unseen. In the Bible history he is not only present, but his very voice is heard; his footprints are traceable, even as when a man walketh on the sand; the mantle of second causes folded back, his hand is visible in its naked majesty and power; across the historic stage he is seen to move, himself the actor in the marvelous scene. In a word, the sacred history is a record of miracles; and in this respect it stands alone. Only to it has been permitted to enter the region of the supernatural, and so to uncover the Divine phenomena that the reader is more than made to feel, for he doth in truth see, that this is the finger of God. That an awful grandeur should surround such a history is only what was to be expected. But how should we have been prepared, till the history itself presented it, to find so great a simplicity in the record of the miraculous? Compare a battle-scene, as described by Thucydides in his account of the war of the Peloponnesians and Athenians, where it was only host that encountered host, with a battle-scene in the wars of Israel, when it was the artillery of heaven—the hailstones hurled, and the bolted lightning flashed directly from Jehovah's hand—that routed the foe; how elaborate and highly worked the former, how simply and artlessly narrated is the latter!

Another characteristic of the sacred histories is the unity of direction in which the several portions

or fragments point. Here are separate historical pieces, written by different hands, at wide intervals, and under very diverse circumstances; yet are they like so many converging lines of light making for their focal point. No matter what may be the historian's own epoch, or the local circumstances which determine his stand-point; he writes with his eye ever upon one object—the manifestation of God in the redemption of the race. Hence it happens, what we shall find in no other literature, that some thirty historical pieces, each but fragmentary, and covering many centuries, when put together, instead of a mere fasciculus, form a continuous volume, whose several parts fit in and harmonize as thoroughly as if one pen had written the whole. Or let us say, rather, that so great a unity in diversity can only be accounted for on the admission that it is the work of one superintending mind—even his who is the Father of the ages, and who seeth the end from the beginning.

A feature in the Biblical histories, which can not fail to strike one, is that events which the profane historian, if noticing them at all, would have barely recorded, are given with much minuteness; while other events, which the profane historian would have minutely chronicled, are dispatched in the briefest notice. The explanation of this will be found in the design of the Biblical history, which was to develop God's special providence in the evolution of a scheme of remedial grace. This the in-

spired historian has constantly in his view, so that he dwells on whatsoever event, be it great or small, which at the time reflected most directly upon it. And how marvelously, by this means, have the sacred historians illustrated their great theme, while, in a literary point of view, their method gives a singularly-pleasing variety to their pages. For in the progress of the narrative, which, opening with an account of the creation, unfolds itself in the grand vicissitudes of nations, and going forth from Palestine as a center, embraces the entire ancient world, we are ever meeting, interspersed with great historical events, charming episodes of domestic life and snatches of biography. While there is being exhibited to us, on the vast theater of the world, where kingdoms are seen to rise and fall, a special providence, suddenly we are introduced to some quiet nook of home-life, that there, as well, we may behold the finger of God; so that never, in any other history, has it been so vividly illustrated, that the Great Ruler of the universe worketh out his plans alike in the great and the small.

The Hebrew nation, with whose history so large a portion of the historical Scripture is taken up, has been represented by Voltaire as an obscure Syrian tribe; yet that tribe has exercised an amazing influence over the destinies of mankind—over all the feelings, thoughts, beliefs, and deeds of men, even to the most remote corners of the earth. What about that people was there so peculiar as to

account for this fact? Wherein did it differ from the other nations of antiquity, that while their thoughts, feelings, beliefs, have become extinct, having left, as the fossil races on the rocks, merely their dead remains, the thoughts, feelings, and beliefs of the ancient Hebrews have an existence, a life, and a potential influence to this present time? The peculiarity of the Jewish nation was this—that they alone were a people educated by a revelation. Not the least interesting and instructive aspect of their history comes out when we view it in this light, since it exhibits by what means, and after what method, God himself educated and disciplined a nation, so that it might fulfill the part which he intended it to do, in the education of the race at large.

To unfold this phase of the Hebrew history would lead us into a question which our limits will not allow us to present with the details necessary to its right elucidation. It is a question, however, which well merits the consideration alike of the philosopher and the theologian. The reader who has the wish to prosecute it will find it treated with singular ability in the dissertation on "Moral and Metaphysical Philosophy" in the *Encyclopædia Metropolitana.*

That the Bible history is the most ancient of all histories, is a fact universally known. But in what sense is it the most ancient? Herodotus, the earli-

est profane historian extant, completed his history in the year B. C. 444; Moses had completed the Pentateuch in the year B. C. 1451, so that he preceded Herodotus by upward of a thousand years. In this sense then the Bible history is the most ancient, that it was the first written. But it is also the most ancient as to its contents. Herodotus carries his history back to somewhat over 700 years before the Christian era; Moses carries his back 4000 years before that era, for he commences with an account of the creation of the earth; gives us the name, and the names of the children, of the first created man; traces down to his own times, in the direct line of genealogical descent, the birth, the life, and the death of the gray fathers of the world. On his pages we have the sole monument of primeval history; for where tradition had lost its way, finding no footprints on the sands of ancient time, Moses has laid bare the footsteps of living men—even of that man who first opened his eyes upon the infant earth.

In striking contrast with the fact that it is the most ancient, place the fact that the Scripture history is also the most modern of histories. For events which have yet to be written by the historian, and which could not have a place on his pages, seeing they have not yet happened, will be found already narrated by the sacred historians. If to them it was given to restore the past, it was also permitted unto them to anticipate the future. They

have described the full round circle of history. On the one side it touches the beginning, on the other the end of time.

Let us for a moment ponder the value of the prophetic element in the Biblical history.

And first, it is a voucher for the divinity of that book which contains the history. With regard to miracles as an evidence of Christianity, it must be confessed that so far they have a diminishing value. For, removed by centuries from the date of their performance, we can scarcely be said to be in so favorable a position to feel their full force, as those were who saw them wrought, or who received an account of them from eye-witnesses. No doubt testimony may be a sufficient voucher, however distant the event which it has transmitted, still testimony can not be said to increase in evidential value as the channel lengthens through which it has to flow. The evidence from miracles, therefore, though still sufficient, may be said to be diminished; but, as if to compensate for this, the evidence from prophecy has an increasing force; for the older a prediction is, just in proportion is it a more valuable testimony when it has been fulfilled.

The infidel meets us with the taunt that the Bible is so very old a book; but does he not perceive how the taunt recoils upon himself? It *is* an old book, the oldest extant by very many centuries; and stamped with its own antiquity are many of the predictions which it contains. They lie far back

behind the longest conceivable range of human foresight or conjecture. They separate, by the breadth of centuries, the event from its first announcement. Across that wide interval no human eye could have caught the forecast shadows of the rise and fall of empires yet to be founded; the building and ruin of cities of which not one stone had yet been laid. The Bible *is* ancient, and so are its prophecies. Will then the infidel read the pages of the modern traveler who describes the present condition of Egypt, Babylon, Tyre, Ephesus, Smyrna, Thyatira; and having read these then turn to the pages of this so old book?

A Gibbon or a Volney, friends to Christianity neither of them, have nevertheless become witnesses to its truth. They could not describe what they saw among the ruined cities of the East, without repeating almost the identical words of the ancient seers. In copying what the iron hand of time had written on broken pillars and shattered friezes, on tumbled masses of fallen masonry, and on sand-mounds drifted from the desert, which had buried beneath them the once magnificent stadium, the gorgeous palace, and the stupendous temple, the traveler has unwittingly transcribed the fulfillment of many an ancient prediction.

Now let us view the two facts in combination. The Scripture history is at once the most ancient and the most modern of histories; and if we do not mistake, we shall find here a very striking proof

of its authenticity. This history as to the remote past has no cotemporary witness to vouch for its credibility. It moves in its solitary track through ancient centuries quite alone. If I ask for corroborative testimony, there is no voice so ancient to bear witness unto its credibility; no other record so archaic with which I may compare it. There are no coeval echoes even, not a single cotemporary tradition, to which this history can refer me for testimony of its authenticity. Shall I be safe in following it, in taking it as my guide? The reply is this: A history which has been and is still being proved authentic with reference to the future, where it has shot ahead of all other histories, is entitled to be credited as to the past, where it has ventured farther back than any other history has gone. If its chronicles of the future have been found correct, then we say this is a voucher that its chronicles of the past are also correct; and thus, in the absence of other witnesses, it has become its own witness.

But here we must qualify our statement that the Bible history as to the past is without cotemporary corroboration. It has had long to wait for the witnesses, but at length they have appeared. Nineveh and Babylon were not without their chroniclers—the Herodotuses and the Froissarts of their day—who recorded the pageants of the palace, the victories on the field of battle, and the triumphant processions of the victors. But strange enough, though these chronicles were written on marble tab-

lets and alabaster slabs, yet they were lost to the world; while the Scripture histories, written on the fragile papyrus or the perishable parchment, were preserved. Had these former histories also been preserved, the friends of truth were ready to exclaim, How striking the corroboration they might have furnished of the truth of the Scripture history! But the wish seemed vain. Three thousand years had passed away since eye looked on the native annals of Babylon or Nineveh; but the grave has given up its dead. These buried cities have returned from their tombs, and their rock-written histories, which were hidden so long, and which were believed to be lost forever, are disclosed. By the labors of Botta and Layard, as explorers, the long-hidden book of Nineveh's history has been exhumed; while by the learning of Professor Grotefend, Professor Lassen, and Sir Henry Rawlinson, as interpreters, the characters with which the stone leaves of that book are inscribed have been deciphered; and now we may be said to have the annals of the Assyrian empire in our hands, and have only to wait a more familiar knowledge of the cuneiform writing, to possess a more detailed history of that early people than we have of the Greeks and Romans, or even of the first aboriginals of our own island.

And what is the bearing of the discovery and deciphering of these long covered, but now uncovered, antique tablets? It is to furnish, during

about a thousand years, a history which runs co-temporaneously with the Scripture narrative; and at whatever points these two histories come in contact, the coincidence between the Ninevite monuments and the Scripture records is such as incontestably to prove the genuineness and authenticity of the latter.

CHAPTER XII.

THE BIOGRAPHIES OF SCRIPTURE.

With his usual profound sagacity, Dr. Chalmers makes one of his incidental weighty sayings, which shows how strongly he was impressed with the importance of the study of the Scripture biographies in their literary aspects: "I have never entered much on the study of Scripture characters, though I doubt not much might be gathered this way, both for the purpose of a moral influence on one's own mind, and also so as to make out a dramatic consistency in the statements given and the traits exhibited of certain individuals, which would furnish an internal evidence for the Bible."

The first thing which probably strikes a reader in the Bible biographies is their exceeding life-likeness. These portraits, so to call them, of the world's "gray fathers" are the merest outlines; yet so bold is the etching, that one is reminded of those studies of heads by the old masters. So forcibly has the individual expression been caught, that, if I might say so, we recognize the features across the breadth of thirty centuries. The reader may possibly have seen hung on some household wall a portrait of an ancestor in the family whom he had never seen;

and yet, if it is a work of high art, there is about it an individuality of expression, which somehow produces the conviction that it must be a correct likeness. Precisely do we thus feel in reading the brief biographies of the Old Testament worthies. We never saw the men—can not therefore compare their portraitures with the originals; but so great is the individuality in the former, that we are at once impressed with the notion that they are correct representations. And then so familiar and home-like are the groupings, that one forgets for the time that they are so far removed from our own times. Abraham sitting at his tent door; Isaac going forth to the fields at even-tide to meditate; old Jacob weeping on the neck of his long-lost son; these might be hung upon our walls as household pictures. We forget that they were the ancients of olden times, the pilgrim citizens of a foreign land. In so fresh an interest have their memories been preserved, that they seem to be living still—not strangers, but our own familiars. Now, this is surely the highest achievement of the biographic art; and unquestionably the sacred biographers have accomplished it.

It will perhaps be said that the pencil of the painter has assisted us in figuring to our mind's eye the features of a Moses, a David, an Elijah, or a Samson. But would the painter's own conception of the individualities of these ancient Hebrews have been so vivid, or so impressively transferred to the

canvas, if their biographies had been written by less graphic pens?

Another striking feature in the Scripture biographies is their variety, or the great range of character and condition which they present. You have the hero, the patriot, the poet, the prophet, the priest, the recluse, the politician, the prince, the plebeian, the simple patriarch and the polished courtier—all exhibited with the exactest individualization, but at the same time with a comprehension which entirely takes away the contractedness which so generally disfigures what may be called class-biography. The prophet is represented not merely as a prophet; nor the poet merely as a poet; nor the politician merely as a politician; but each is delineated also in the wider humanity which unites them with the universal brotherhood.

Another characteristic of the Scripture biographies is the solemn, we might say awful, grandeur which surrounds these "holy men of old" as actors in a divine drama. The great scheme of Providence, as it revolves its majestic cycles, brings them into view, each at his appointed time, as men raised up, specially chosen and endowed, to act their parts in a history which evolves itself in miracles and epic adventure. The Grecian or Roman mythology would have apotheosized such men, and on the pages of the poets they would have figured as demigods. But though there shone around them a certain God-like glory, from their near access to him who alone

is God, there is nothing approaching divine honor paid to them in the Scriptures; but they are uniformly spoken of as men of like passions with ourselves. "I have said ye are gods, and all of you are children of the Most High; but ye shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes." The moderation with which men of so heroic a stamp are spoken of is in most striking contrast with the mythic extravagance of ancient profane biography, to which we might apply the language of the poet:

> "I have no spur
> To prick the sides of my intent, but only
> Vaulting ambition, which o'erleaps itself,
> And falls on th' other side."

If any where is to be found the true heroic in its highest epic forms, we venture to say it is in the Hebrew Scriptures, which, with so rare a modesty, have memorized the most brilliant epochs and most illustrious men that ever adorned the history of a nation. Fallen, alas! is that people now, who were once the favored of Heaven; fallen from being a nation of princes, to be wandering tribes of misers and usurers; but the ancient history of the people of God is brilliant with "names which ascend far back to those high times when the Divine Presence shook the mercy-seat between the cherubim, and which derive their splendor from no earthly prince, but from the awful voice which bade their fathers be nearest of the congregation to the vision. Such were the princes of the house of Judah."

Another feature of the Bible biographies is their extreme fidelity. Without exaggeration, either of praise or of censure, an impartial pen has recorded alike the virtues and the vices, what is to be imitated and what avoided, in the lives of these men of old. In this respect, among the ancients, the sacred biographers are altogether singular. Nor is the contrast much less if we compare them with those modern memoirs, which so often betray either the partiality of friendship or the bitterness of hatred. How often do we find the memory of some favorite hero garnished with fulsome panegyric, his faults, even his vices, being palliated or apologized for under soft names; while, if it is a memory which the biographer wishes to blacken, no epithet is thought too severe by which to proclaim some trifling misdeed, and none too equivocal in which to whisper the most shining action. When will those who employ the biographic pen learn to take for their exemplars the biographies in Scripture!

One other feature in these biographies which I would notice, is what may be called their self-evolved individualization of character. There is no mistaking any one individual, for you see him as he is. His qualities, for good or evil, stand out as if chiseled on the living rock. You could detect his exact idiosyncrasy among a thousand. Asked to give an analysis of the character of Moses, or David, or Peter, or Paul, you could have no manner of difficulty in doing so. Now turn up one of

the pages of our historians when some notable personage has died—the very same, be it noted, who has figured in the historian's preceding chapters—and you will generally find an attempt to summarize his intellectual and moral characteristics; which summary not unfrequently ascribes to him qualities which the historian's narrative of his actions had utterly failed to suggest to your own mind. The truth is, that, but for this analytic list of qualities appended to their lives, you might close the book without even a conjecture what the historian himself thought of his personages; and all you get from the catalogue of virtues or vices is *his* estimate of their character. How different from this is the method of the sacred biographers! They never treat you to a summing up of the character of their personages; they do not need to do so; for they have given so exact a characterization of each of them in their narrative of his actions, that you already perfectly know him. With them characterization is a form of self-portraiture. The individual is made to act his own character.

The New Testament, if less rich in biographies than the Old, contains one life—that of Christ—which more than compensates the lack. The question has often been asked, but never yet satisfactorily answered by the infidel or any one else, how the life of Christ, so incomparably superior to the finest creations of our greatest poets or romancists, if a fiction, could have been conceived and executed

by a few illiterate Jews? If ever a life was, this assuredly is an original. It stands out unique in the gallery of universal biography. And yet we are asked to believe not merely that it is a historic fiction, but that so rare an imagination as was requisite to produce such a fiction was possessed by a few Galilean fishers. Verily, next to the life itself, this were the most marvelous of miracles.

I have already remarked on the moderation, amounting even to modesty, with which the sacred biographers speak of the renowned personages whose lives they record. In no case is this more signally exhibited than by the apostles, the biographers of Jesus. Seldom do you meet with a panegyric from themselves concerning him whom they loved so affectionately, and so profoundly admired. It is otherwise with the prophets, for the Savior not yet having appeared, when his life would speak for itself, they kindle expectation by anticipative eulogy. He is the rose of Sharon and the lily of the valley, the chief among ten thousand and altogether lovely. But when the Perfect One had come, what need for this? His life would be its own panegyric. You read his eulogy while you read his biography.

The infidel points to the seeming contradictions in the life of Christ as if they invalidated its truthfulness. But has it never occurred to him that without these it could not possibly be true? for how otherwise, we would ask, could the life of the God-man have been written? It behooved both

natures, the Divine and the human, to preserve their proper attributes; each, as occasion called for it, was to speak and act in its appropriate character; and how could this be without apparent contradictions? When the Divinity speaks, its fitting language is, "I and my Father are one;" but what is the humanity to say other than "My Father is greater than I?" At Cana's bridal banquet the Son of the Highest sits a guest, and at his creative word the water reddens into wine; but when faint and foot-sore with travel Mary's son arrives at Jacob's well, he is fain to ask a cup of water from a stranger woman. In yonder ship, tossed on the storm-waves of Genesareth's lake, lies one asleep—doubtless overcome by fatigue, for many were his journeyings and frequent his night vigils; it is Jesus the *man*, who sleeps so deep a slumber in his weariness that even the howlings of the tempest fail to awake him; but now awoke by the cry of his disciples, where is he whom slumber lately held fast bound in its drowsy chain? The *God* looks out upon the storm, and at his imperial glance the hurricane-winds hold their breath, and the wild waves droop their surgy crests. These are seeming contradictions, and we pray the reader specially to mark that the sacred biographers never attempt to reconcile or even to explain them. Now we venture to assert that no impostor ever possessed the moral qualities necessary for such a task. We much question whether he would have ventured to pen such

apparent contradictions, or if he had, certain we are he would have attempted to reconcile them. No, not to the fabulist belongs that bold reliance in the majesty of truth, which sustained the Evangelists in their task while writing the life of the God-man.

In the Davidic Psalms we have one of the most remarkable pieces of autobiography ever penned. The whole man is there, not only his outer, but also his inner life. As the eye glances over these autobiographic hymns, a series of self-pictures, struck off as it were by a process of mental photography, seems to pass before us. Or shall we rather call them a series of dissected views, for the painter or the photographer give only the outward forms, but David, like the anatomist, has laid bare what lies beneath. On reading the autobiography of a great modern poet, we felt very much as if we had been standing at the threshold of some large temple, whose dim lamps reflected phantasms along the walls, the shadows but scarce the shapes of objects. The reason of this we took to be that Goethe did not know himself. We found ourselves admitted only to so many of the poet's inner musings, while a curtain seemed ever and anon to drop, concealing from our eye, as mayhap it had done from his own, the inmost secrets of the man. But with David there is no disguise; his whole soul is laid open; so that his hymns furnish what we venture to say is not to be found in any other literature—a specimen of perfect autobiography.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE TWO STANDARDS OF LITERARY MERIT.

THERE are two tribunals at which every work of literature or art must abide judgment; the one the erudite criticism of the few, the other the opinion of the many. With regard to the former, we shall admit it to be the severer ordeal; but we have our doubts whether the latter is not the more decisive. Those who best understand the philosophy of criticism are the readiest to confess that the verdict of the "*communis sensus*" does, in the long run, rule the question of merit. It is not that the many have studied the principles of taste, or the theory of beauty, or the rules of criticism. And hence it often happens that they can give no other reason why a great picture, or a great poem, or a great oration, pleases them, than simply that it does so. Yet, in the end, their judgment is generally found to be correct. Nor do we think the reason of this is far to seek. Nature, the same which guided the painter's pencil, filled the poet's eye, and touched the lips of the orator, is also the instructress of the multitude; so that it is her own responsive voice which, through them, acknowledges the merits of her own works. True art is a copyist of Nature,

and the closer the imitation the more likely the artist shall achieve two triumphs; on the one hand, his fidelity to Nature will impart a measure of her elevation and grandeur to his works; while, on the other hand, they will reach downward among the root-feelings, which are very much the same in all. Hence, we believe, the reason why it happens that in the main the verdict of the multitude on works of real genius is correct. Nor may any author expect his fame to be lasting who can not make his appeal to this tribunal—that is, to the judgment of unsophisticated Nature.

We shall probably hear it said that the attention of the multitude is apt to be seduced by tinsel and glitter, and that their understandings may be confounded by indefinite and mysterious terms, while a show of learning, of which they themselves are consciously deficient, may impose upon their ignorance. But, notwithstanding, I am inclined to believe that in all countries the people are the best judges of genuine eloquence. A frothy bombast may please them more than one would wish; but let a true orator in plain and simple language address them, and they will be moved to the depths of their nature. When he has so studied art as to appear artless, and what may have cost him much labor is poured forth with seeming spontaneousness, the common people will hear him gladly, will sway to his eloquence as the branches of the forest to the rush of winds, and be infinitely more pleased with

his natural ornaments than with any amount of vitiated decoration.

It must surely have been in a fit of spleen the great Roman lyrist allowed himself to pen the line:

"Odi profanum vulgus, et arceo."

A better insight into human nature was shown by the celebrated French comedian, of whom it is recorded that he was accustomed to read his comedies before performance to a favorite servant or housekeeper, and when he perceived that the passages which he intended to be humorous and laughable had no effect upon her he altered them. The same kind of principle may be observed in another recorded habit of his, that of requesting the actors to bring their children to the rehearsal of a new piece, that he might judge of the effect of particular passages by the natural emotions they raised in their minds. In this Molière showed a profound knowledge of human nature, and of the philosophy of criticism.

Now, what we have to say of the Bible, in view of the two tribunals of opinion, is, that it has stood before both with approbation.

It has abidden the ordeal of erudite criticism. Our greatest scholars, who have given the grounds of their judgment, which they have justified by proof-specimens, have pronounced the very highest eulogiums on the literary merits of the Bible. To give even a tithe of the encomiums which our men

of erudition have pronounced on this sacred classic, would swell out our pages beyond what we can afford. Perhaps we can not better summarize their verdict than by quoting the language of Sir William Jones, whose refined taste equaled his erudition, vast as it was: "I have regularly and attentively read these Holy Scriptures, and am of opinion that this volume, independent of its Divine origin, contains more sublimity and beauty, more pure morality, more important history, and finer strains of poetry and eloquence, than can be collected from all other books, in whatever age or language they may have been composed." To this I might add the testimony of a very different witness, whose taste for fine writing would seem to have overcome, for the time at least, his prejudice against Christianity; this other witness is Rousseau: "I will confess to you, further, that the majesty of the Scripture strikes me with admiration, as the purity of the Gospel hath its influence on my heart. Peruse the works of our philosophers; with all their pomp of diction, how mean, how contemptible, are they compared with the Scripture! Is it possible that a book at once so simple and sublime should be merely the work of man?"

But the Bible has also stood at the tribunal of unlearned criticism. As was said of its Divine Author, so of itself with equal truth may it be affirmed, that the common people hear it gladly. Posterity echoes antiquity in its praise; the voices

of centuries have attested its popularity; childhood has felt the spell of its matchless picturesqueness; and unlettered age has warmed at the touch of its kindling poetry.

And yet how much has been done to shake the confidence of the people in the literary merits of the Bible! It has been criticised as by an ordeal of fire. The shafts of ridicule, the arrows of scorn, have been shot at it from a thousand quivers. It has been branded as a dangerous book, laughed at as a silly book, and despised as a weak book. The wit has made it the butt of his jests, the cynic of his snarls, the humorist of his buffoonery. If book could be damaged in the eyes of the people by every possible combination of hostile criticism, the Bible is that book. But it has not proved so. It still holds its place unshaken in the reverence and the admiration of the multitude. The instinctive taste of the common people has recognized its literary beauties; their instinctive susceptibility has felt its literary power; and their instinctive sense of justice has pronounced a just verdict upon its literary merits.

Allusion has been made to the efforts of the enemies of truth to disparage the Bible in the opinion of the common people. It is surely to be regretted that the friends of truth have not been equally industrious to commend the literary merits of the Bible by those means which would reach the masses. Has any thing like justice been done to

Biblical literature either in our elementary or higher schools? Some of us can remember how, in the former, we got long tasks from it, and had to spell our way through "polysyllabic chapters and joyless genealogies." Had our teachers singled out such passages as, by their simple beauties, are calculated to impress even a youthful reader, and made some attempt to point out those which might be less obvious, we have a strong impression that our school-boy associations and recollections of the Bible would be less irksome and insipid. And with reference to our higher schools, we can not help being of opinion that, if occasionally the same pains were taken to point out the literary beauties of a chapter in Isaiah or Job, as is done to exhibit the beauties of some passage from Addison or Milton, the result would be in the highest degree beneficial to the interests both of literature and religion.

PART SECOND.

LITERARY ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE BIBLE.

LITERARY ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE BIBLE.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

Among the multifarious causes which have helped to advance the progress of modern civilization, that will be admitted to be one of the greatest of which the three following facts may be affirmed: First, that it has pioneered the arts and letters by assisting their introduction into barbarous nations. Second, that it has promoted the arts and letters by assisting their advancement among civilized nations, where they had already gained a footing. Third, that it restored the arts and letters to Europe when it had fallen back into martial barbarism, and restored to Europe its intellectual vigor when it had lapsed into an effeminating superstition.

What then has been at once the pioneer, the promoter, and the restorer of literature and the arts? It will be our object to show that the history of modern civilization gives an explicit answer to this question; and that its answer is—the Bible.

The mention of modern civilization in this connection suggests the instructive fact, how very few of the nations of antiquity which emerged from a state of barbarism have left any monuments of their literature or their arts. The little which time has

spared of the history of the bulk of ancient nations is such as to occasion but small regret that oblivion has blotted out the rest; for while the annals of war and the calendar of crime are curtailed of some of their chapters, the history of literature or of philosophy has probably not lost a page.

We take it to be with nations as with individuals, that to make a figure in the world and leave a reputation for eminence, requires a certain innate force of character combined with natural talent. Hence we would conclude, that as from the want of these the great mass of mankind pass away almost unnoticed by their cotemporaries, and altogether unknown to posterity; so from the lack of the social capacity, or the aggregate natural talents, the great bulk of ancient nations have failed to perpetuate a reputation, except for their barbarities and their crimes, a species of posthumous fame which it does not require much genius to secure.

And if we might carry out the parallel somewhat farther, we would observe, that as in the case of individuals whom Nature may have endowed with superior parts, some have failed to reach distinction from not being placed in circumstances favorable to the cultivation of their peculiar gifts; so many nations, which had in them the germs of greatness, have missed becoming great, owing to adverse influences which nipped these germs in the bud. Though true genius is known to have surmounted the greatest difficulties by its own indomitable energy, yet

owing to poverty, to constitutional bashfulness, to the want of patronage, or still more of sympathy and appreciation, it doubtless will have happened that "some mute, inglorious Milton," with the fires of poetry in his soul, has sunk into the cold grave, where the lamp which under happier conditions might not much longer have been flameless, is quenched forever; and so we believe many an ancient nation might have been heard of with renown, had not the disasters of its fate prematurely overtaken it.

We would venture to carry out the parallel yet another step. There are few difficulties in the pursuit of knowledge which the poor scholar finds greater than the want of books. So with nations, this want may be reckoned among the causes which have prevented many of them from attaining to literary eminence; when deficient in the mental vigor and originality which are requisite to produce a native literature, they were also without the aid which an imported literature would have afforded. The Greeks seem to have been endowed by nature with that rare force of natural genius, which enabled them to strike out an original literature that was to become a model to succeeding ages. The Romans, less richly endowed with inventive genius, would probably never have ranked among classic nations, if they had not profited by the literature of Greece.

If we take those nations which have been without the Bible, we may classify them into three groups.

The first, represented by Greece, were those very few which by the force of their native genius reared for themselves a native literature. The second, represented by Rome, includes those nations, also few, which, stimulated and assisted by a foreign literature, attained to literary distinction. The third, including the great mass of ancient nations, presents them as barely emerged from the darkness of barbarism, when they passed away without leaving a trace of polite learning or the fine arts behind them. How differently it might have fared with these had they possessed the Bible, will perhaps appear when we come to indicate the happier fate of modern nations, once as barbarous, which enjoy this best of all auxiliaries to civilization.

Before proceeding to illustrate the three great facts into which I have summarized the literary achievements of the Bible, it will be proper to take a glance at the literature and the arts of those nations which, though destitute of the sacred volume, have merited to be esteemed both literary and artistic.

As representing classic antiquity I shall select its most polished nation—Greece. No one will hesitate to own, that the land "where burning Sappho loved and sung;" where Demosthenes won his ever immortal and still increasing fame as the prince of orators; where were born Praxiteles, an acknowledged master of the beautiful, and Phidias, of the grand in sculpture; where arose a bright succes-

sion of poets, painters, sculptors, orators, and historians; who not only shone as a galaxy in the firmament when the literary stars of other lands were few, but who still continued to shine with as conspicuous a luster now when innumerable constellations, each composed of stars of the first magnitude, have appeared elsewhere; no one, I say, will hesitate to own that this land has earned for itself the proud distinction of being the most classical of antiquity, or be surprised that it has left to succeeding lands models in oratory, in sculpture, in poetry, and in architecture; and yet Greece was without the Bible. It was therefore an exaggeration to affirm that the fostering influences of Revelation are indispensable to the growth of polite letters or high art; since in the isles of the Ægean both these had attained very near to perfection before Christianity crossed its waters. Still, we venture to affirm that if the land of Homer, of Demosthenes, and of Phidias, had enjoyed that volume which is the sole divine interpreter of nature and of God, the truest expositor of truth, and the most beautiful embodiment of spiritual beauty, its arts and its literature might have been blameless of those faults, which its most ardent admirers must admit detract so materially from their singular merit.

Of Grecian poetry, who will deny the originality and wonderful invention, its rich fancy and creative imagination, its pathos, its descriptive power, its affluence of imagery, its varied numbers and its

mellifluous diction? Yet was the poetry of Greece only a splendid meteor—by the poetry of Italy faintly reflected—which failed to illustrate Providence, or illumine the tomb, or reveal to mankind the divinely beautiful and good. It was not given even to a Homer to draw down from Parnassus the beam which was to irradiate the face of celestial truth, and light the path to immortality. How different it might have been had Homer known to invoke Isaiah's muse!

As to the general literature of Greece, we shall not here inquire whether it made the people chaste, honest, temperate, and truthful; since the same question might be retorted on Christian literature. But we shall rather ask, did it even inculcate these virtues, or assist to foster them? It certainly did not; for seeing it is a necessity of his moral nature that man must reflect the deity whom he worships, what was to be expected of the ancient Greek, when the gods whom he saw in his country's literature were liars, thieves, bacchanals, and voluptuaries? "Where," asks an eloquent writer, speaking of the Roman deities, and with equal truth he might have used the same language respecting those of Greece, "shall we find one among all the objects of their worship, whose attributes indicate, on the fancy that has imagined it, the operation of any thing like a principle either of holiness or of love? Where shall we find one whom its worshipers have invested with the qualities either of purity or of mercy?

All their duties appear to be the product of a strange and affecting combination of depraved passions and guilty fears. The principal gods of the Pantheon are raised above men, solely by the superior enormity of their crimes; their greater power only enabling them to be the greater adepts and the greater monsters in vice. They are the patrons and patterns of all that is cruel—of intemperance, and lust, and knavery, and jealousy, and revenge. Thus men love to sin; and they make their gods sinners, because they are desirous to sin under their patronage; yet are they at the same time conscious of guilt, and while they commit sin, and even laugh at sin, they tremble with superstitious apprehension."

The Greeks were preëminently an imaginative people, and their poetic feeling is expressed in all their works. The idealization of the *το καλον*, or the beautiful, went beyond what any other people has ever reached; and judging from the specimens which have been preserved, their sculpture has successfully translated their ideal of the beautiful into form. Viewed merely as pieces of art their higher statuary is faultless. Yet we can not help being of the opinion that there is in it a radical blemish, which a knowledge of the Bible would have taught their sculptors to avoid. Art to be fully successful must attempt only what is possible—that is, what is true. It is not enough that there be beauty of form and expression, but the higher idea also which

that form is intended to enshrine must be such that the imagination and the heart, when doing obeisance to truth, can accept it as true. For then only is idealism a real power, when the ideas which it embodies in objective forms have their subjective counterparts in our emotions and sentiments. Now what we venture to affirm is, that while the sacred statuary of the Greeks exhibits the true and the beautiful in form, it has not embodied the true in idea. We mean not to say that the Grecian idea of beauty in itself was not a true idea; or that their idea of strength, of majesty, of intellect, and power were not in themselves true; and so far as the Greek sculptors strove to personify these their art was the handmaiden of truth. But when they aspired to chisel in marble, or to mold in brass, divine beauty, divine strength, divine majesty, and divine intellect, the attempt was a revolt against truth. The statue of a Jupiter or an Apollo, as it came from a Greek studio, would be exactly true to the rules of art; but to the idea of art it could not be true, if our interpretation of that idea is correct. For what does that statue actually represent? Certainly not the divine; since not in marble, or brass, or ivory, can even a Phidias succeed in personating Godhead. And if that statue does not truly exhibit the divine, so neither does it exhibit the human; for exceeding nature, by its attempt to rise to the supernatural, it is too imaginatively grand to be the image of a man. The idea itself

of the divine personated in the human is a true one and as we know was realized in the person of incarnate God; but the idea is falsified in the marble or the brass of the Grecian sculptors.

Hence with our profound admiration of the literature and the arts of Greece there mingles a strong conviction that had this land possessed the Bible, these in their tendency would have been more elevating; in their applications more beneficial; in their conception more pure; and even in their forms still more perfect.

Having drawn an illustration from confessedly the most polished nation of classic antiquity, I shall now select China, as out of sight the best specimen of civilized paganism in these modern times. Here are a people without the Bible, who yet can boast a literature rich in works of every description, both in prose and verse; and among whom, if not the fine arts, at least art, manufactures, have been carried to a high pitch; and to whom priority of discovery seems of right to belong with regard to more than one of the great modern inventions which were at first reputed European. Again, therefore, we are reminded that it would be historically untrue to assert that the fostering influences of revelation are essential to the growth of literature and the arts; for as before we found these a well-foliaged and fruitful tree in the West, so now in the far East we also find them bourgeoned and blossoming ere yet a ray of Christianity has pene-

trated the superstitions of paganism. But do we find no blemishing characteristic in Chinese civilization, which a knowledge of the Scriptures might have prevented? Over against the singular inventiveness of the Chinese set this fact—that they rarely, if ever, improve upon their inventions; but soon as a discovery is made by them thus it remains stereotyped. And the reason of this is doubtless to be found in their isolation; for, lying hermetically sealed up within their own walls, they own to no filiation with the brotherhood of nations; but dwell alone, a people proudly, selfishly, unsocially separate from their human kin. Hence they have become filled with the conceit of national perfectibility, which could not fail to put an arrest on their national progress. Now we need scarcely add that had China been a Bible land, this notion of perfectibility could never have gained ground, nor this position of isolation have been persisted in. Hence, if instead of the books of Confucius, the Chinese had received the books of Moses and the prophets, what a noble civilization would theirs by this time have been!

Here I can imagine the infidel to say: "You have glanced at nations which were without the Bible; I now turn to a nation which alone possessed it for centuries. And what do I find? A wretched people, of a low civilization, ever ignorant and vulgar, strangers alike to letters and the arts." To this scornful satire of the brilliant skeptic—for I

have given in substance the words of Voltaire—an eloquent writer has replied: "Does it become you, a writer of the eighteenth century, to charge the ancient Hebrews with ignorance? A people who, while your barbarian ancestors, while even the Greeks and Latins, wandering in the woods, could scarcely procure for themselves clothing and a settled subsistence, already possessed all arts of necessity, and some of mere pleasure; who not only knew how to feed and rear cattle, till the earth, work upon wood, stone, and metals, weave cloth, dye wool, embroider stuffs, polish and engrave on precious stones; but even then adding to manual arts those of taste and refinement, surveyed land, appointed their festivals according to the motions of the heavenly bodies, and ennobled their solemnities by the pomp of ceremonies, by the sound of instruments, music, and dancing; who even then committed to writing the history of the origin of the world, that of their own nation, and their ancestors; who had poetry and writers skilled in all the sciences then known, great and brave commanders, a pure worship, just laws, a wise form of government; in short, this was the only one of all ancient nations that has left us authentic monuments of genius and of literature. Can this nation be justly charged with ignorance and inurbanity?" To the same effect, I might quote from Dr. Edersheim's "History of the Jewish Nation." His chapters in which he describes the social condition, customs, and cul-

ture of the Jews, give one a very high idea of Hebrew civilization. As has justly been remarked, there is no surer sign of a high civilization than a great division of labor and a complication of trades. Take then the following passage: "Among the craftsmen we find artificers in wood and all kinds of metal, the precious metals being fused with lead or some of the alkalies; tent-makers, masons, tanners, tailors, shoemakers, jewelers, coach-builders, etc., who busily and successfully plied their trades, although with tools much inferior to those now in use. The potters and glass-workers produced flat and deep plates, cups, looking-glasses, spoons, tumblers—holes in which were covered with pitch or tin—bottles, and smelling-bottles which were filled with scented oil. Some, as tailors and copy-writers, would go about to procure work, or do it in the houses of their customers. Hats, caps, shirts, napkins, towels, pocket-handkerchiefs, vails, and many other articles which we could scarcely have expected to find in Palestine, seem to have been in common use. The washers were properly fullers, who first cleaned the clothes with water and then took out the stains by various chemical agents, such as alum, chalk, potash, etc. Dyeing and ornamental work of various kinds, whether with the brush, the needle, or in wood, ivory, stucco, and metal, were also known and practiced."

CHAPTER II.

THE BIBLE HAS BEEN THE PIONEER OF LITERATURE AND THE ARTS.

THE failure of modern missions was confidently predicted by a class of utilitarian philanthropists, who maintained that the natural order was first to civilize, and then to Christianize the heathen. These reasoned thus: Since it is art and science, not religion, which teach men to weave cloth, to cultivate the fields, and build houses; therefore, first get the naked savage, who feeds on roots and shell-fish, and burrows in wretched cave-huts, to clothe himself, to raise crops, and erect decent habitations; and when you have thus lifted him out of the physical slough of savagism up to near the level of a human being, he will be more disposed, as well as better fitted, to listen to the lessons of theology. Now, in theory this project looked excellently well; but when tried—for the utilitarians did give it a trial—it turned out a failure. The savage could not be got to learn the arts first and Christianity afterward. But when the experiment was reversed—Christianity being allowed to forerun, instead of being made to follow the arts, or perhaps, rather, the two being introduced simultaneously—the labors of our missionaries were crowned with

success. And now a large induction of instances, spread over an immense geographical area, and including almost every known diversity of the species, warrants us to proclaim it as a fact experimentally proved that the Bible, and it alone, can prepare the savage for being civilized; that, more than all sciences, all arts, or all literatures, it has a dynamical moral power to raise the human mind from the abysmal depths of barbarism; that, while in its rear, acting as a reserve force, these accomplish not a little, it only can lead the van in the march of the world's civilization.

When a piece of stratified rock is subjected to the wheel of the lapidary, the fossil configurations are brought out on its polished surface as if they were so many fine natural etchings; but it is a piece of rock still, and these exquisite lineations are but the epitaphs of dead animals, lettered with their own remains. Even so art, with its civilization, might perhaps polish the hard surface of heathendom, and bring out some hidden traces of our better humanity in these human fossils; but what was to breathe life into them? not art, not science, not civilization, but Christianity alone could do this. Its only is the vivifying breath, which, when it falls warm on those hearts which had been fossilized into stone, penetrates, softens, resuscitates them, makes them hearts of flesh—hearts which beat now with a true natural life—which may yet beat with a life which is spiritual and divine.

Already has Christianity achieved many benignant triumphs on the stubborn fields of heathendom. It has confronted the cannibal when, at his horrid feasts, he was quaffing human blood, and has made him loathe the ensanguined cup; it has followed the hunter of the woods—then as untamed, apparently as untamable, as the wild beasts he chased—and has led him back, gentle as a child, to sit at the feet of his spiritual teachers; it found the temple-fires of paganism smoking with detestable sacrifices, its altars smeared with the mingled blood of animals and human beings, its idol-gods images hideous to look on, and often symbolic of notions still more hideous to think of: these fires it has extinguished, these altars overturned, and these idols broken in pieces; it has abolished infanticide, it has snatched the aged imbecile from a watery grave, and rescued the living widow from the funeral pyre on which she was about to be consumed with the dead body of her husband; it has converted the tomahawk into the woodman's ax, and the weapons of barbaric warfare into the implements of husbandry; smiling villages have sprung up on the sites of miserable encampments; the cornucopia of industry has poured out its bounteous stores, where before indolence had pined with its empty horn; the sentiments of civilized have been ingrafted on the instincts of nomadic life, thus forming a character at once robust and refined; alien races have been affiliated, hostile tribes united in amity; the girdle

of love is being stretched round the world, a cincture which shall bind together its scattered sons and daughters into one universal brotherhood. Such have been the early fruits, the first beginnings of Christianity. But the end is not yet. Time must be allowed it to complete its triumphs; for while it has done marvels, we do not pretend to say that it will work miracles; or that its operations can countervail the great law of social progress. And it is well known what that law is—that civilization in any, but more especially in barbarous lands, is of slow growth, being the aggregate of small increments, like the annual wood-circles of our exogenous trees.

We, the cultured sons of Britain, whose own forefathers once wandered, half-naked savages, in the woods, and where, but for Christianity, we, their children, might be wandering now, can point to our mighty engines of manufacture—to our immense magazines of trade—to our spreading sails, which carry the produce of these engines and the stores of these magazines to the ends of the earth; we can also point to our venerable colleges of academic learning—to our schools of modern science—to our magnificent galleries of art; we can also point to our cathedrals and necropolises, where the ashes of the illustrious dead repose, and to the brilliant names of the illustrious living—yet let us not think to sneer at the rude architecture, the infant sciences, or the simple arts of the sable

islanders of the Pacific; for on these coral strands Christianity has already laid the foundation of future nations, which may rise but slowly, as our own great nation rose, or even as slowly as the reefs they now inhabit were reared by the tiny masons of the deep, but which some future century shall yet see taking rank with those colonial worlds which our own emigrant countrymen are founding on the wide plains of Polynesia.

The Bible is already a far-traveled book; and let this fact be specially noted, that, wherever it goes, it soon learns to speak the language of the people. The miracle of Pentecost in apostolic history, which it records, might be said to be repeated in its own. For, as these Parthians and Medes, Elamites and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Lybia about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians, were amazed to hear the apostles speak their diverse vernaculars; so might the scattered tribes of more distant regions be amazed to hear the Hebrew Scriptures read in their multiform dialects. Of it, as of the apostles, literally might it be said, that it is filled with the Holy Ghost, and begins to speak with other tongues as the Spirit giveth it utterance. Already it has been translated into upward of one hundred and fifty languages; so that it may be said to have nearly mastered all the dialects of the earth. And

is not this of itself a splendid contribution to universal literature, that the greatest classic of antiquity—for such we hold the Bible to be—instead of being locked up in the dead languages, is now thrown open, in its living vernaculars, to the wide world? We have remarked of nations which had not the inventive genius to originate a purely-native literature, how rapidly they advanced when aided by an imported literature. And if one may augur from historic parallels, it omens happily for the future literature of pagan lands, that already they possess the rich literature of Palestine. Nor ought it to be overlooked here the immense contribution which the translation of the Bible has been the means of making to comparative philology; since it has procured for so many languages that, of which so long as a language is destitute, it never can have a literature—a grammar and vocabulary. And here, again, the parallels in history present a happy augury. For, since the first book ever printed was the Bible, and the art of printing thus inaugurated has had such a splendid success, we can not anticipate otherwise than hopefully for the incipient literature of recently-Christianized lands, seeing the first book translated into and printed in their language is the Bible.

Civilization might be said to be a problem in the resolution of moral forces; and will prove sound and lasting according as these are rightly balanced. The two chief forces which have to be worked in

combination are the social and the individual; in other words, the powers and prerogatives of society in the aggregate and the liberty of its several members. When the former is in excess, you have tyranny; when the latter, anarchy. But when the two are in their just proportions, you have legislation without oppression in the State, and liberty without lawlessness in the citizen. It is from having failed to work out these opposite forces into a stable resultant that so many of the ancient civilizations proved unstable and unlasting. But let us see how admirably these are balanced in the Scriptures!

First, we have the social quantity in the equation of civilization given in its full value. For in no book is sociology laid on so deep and broad a foundation. The idea of the unity of the race, and the correlated ideas of universal brotherhood and the filiation of the nations, are now familiar to us. But how little were they realized, or rather were not thought of at all, till the Bible proclaimed them! And it is not as a theory or a poetic sentiment, but as a historical fact, the Bible proclaims "the whole world kin." It establishes the universal brotherhood by tracing it back to a common ancestry. "God has made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth." The very names of the primal parents, and of the first-born brothers of the race are given. We are introduced to the original household, from which, by

unbroken lineage, the great human family has descended. Thus the problem of civilization is at once pointed toward its true solution; the great truth to be practically wrought out being the recognition of a community of interest and of rights, seeing there is a community of blood and lineage among all the nations of the earth. The question of human progress is thus built upon a foundation which lies deep as the origin of the race. It becomes as it were a household question, and is enshrined in all the sacredness we associate with the family circle. And, doubtless, though it will take time, the great problem shall ultimately be solved in the way which the Bible indicates; and which, more than all other books, it has helped to accelerate.

Then, secondly, the other main quantity in the equation, namely, the individual, is also fully given. Nowhere else is the liberty of personal conscience so fenced round with lofty sanctions, or the doctrine of personal responsibility so conspicuously enforced. Individual man is never represented as a stray waif upon the waters, to be tossed hither and thither without voluntary motion, the sport of circumstance. He is never spoken of as a drop in the ocean, which loses all individuality, absorbed and lost sight of, and carried, without its own choice, whithersoever the tide makes for any shore. But individual man is recognized in the distinct and indestructible prerogatives of his personal being. He

is made to stand forth as having rights which are inalienable, and owing duties which can not be transferred. He is to be recognized by his fellow-men, and to God is directly responsible. The problem of civilization, therefore, as set forth in the Scriptures, is not a vague generalization; for if to be worked out upon the masses, it operates also upon the individual man. It deals not merely with the sum total, but it has equal regard to each separate unit which goes to swell it.

Here then we have the two forces—the social and the individual—in their just combination; and as men shall learn thus to combine them in their efforts to civilize the race, so shall the civilization they effect prove permanent and true.

It needs not that we declare how emphatically Christianity denounces slavery—setting the brand of its utmost reprobation on that unnatural traffic which buys and sells human beings as so many cattle in the market-place; or how, with equal emphasis, the Gospel denounces aggressive war—its benign spirit shuddering at the spectacle of brother shedding brother's blood in wholesale slaughter, that ambition may clutch a crown, or avarice increase its robberies, or revenge gloat its sanguinary ire. Had Christianity its full sway, the shackles would rust unworn, and the sword would be beat into the plowshare.

There is one feature in the problem of sociology, as presented in the Bible, which deserves a separate

notice—I mean the place which it asserts for woman. Created to be the companion of man, how often she has been made his slave, the instrument of his passions, the plaything of his idle hours! This every-where among savage tribes has been literally the case, and even among nations which were civilized, if pagan, woman rarely had assigned to her her due place. This was but another phase of that ferocity which has cursed the earth by its cruelties in war—the stronger trampling on the weaker. But there was this mighty difference—that whereas a feeble tribe might by conquest be made harmless, the influence of woman could not be destroyed. There belongs to her, in each several relation, as sister, wife, mother, a vast social power for good or evil, of which she can not be deprived. If crushed, downtrodden, and despised by an unchristian civilization, woman, alas! had her too ample revenge in the baneful influences, which, from man's fault and her own sad misfortune, went forth from her as by a law of retribution to avenge her on her tyrants. Her womanly nature, which would have shed its sweet and softening influences on society, could not be dried up, but did, without her meaning it, give forth the soured and bitter influences which oppression, to its own just punishment, wrung out from her. Never therefore could there be a true civilization where woman was not assigned her proper place. But when this justice is done to her, what a rich reward she bestows on

man! It is hers then to humanize him by the gentler charities; to ingraft, with her delicate female touch, the softer graces upon the undergrowths of his nature; to distill round the deep roots of his being a secret subtile balm of all purest passions, which, when she has roused into their strength, she then softens without enervating them. It is woman's mission in the quiet privacies of home to feed the center-founts of society with those humanizing influences which distill as naturally from her as its balm from the tree or their odor from the flowers. But why crush the exuding branch, or why tread down the exhaling flower? The more tenderly they are nurtured the richer a balm, the more fragrant an aroma will they yield. And so woman, if herself the nursling of tenderness, will the more tenderly minister.

Now, in the Scriptures woman has assigned to her her proper place; the amenities of her sex are vindicated, her mission is defined, her ministrations are allowed and acknowledged. She is placed at man's side, his companion, his friend, his equal, and helpmeet for him. Weaker in physical frame, she is admonished to cling to him for support; of intellectual energies less vigorous than his, she is taught to make him her counselor; but superior to man in the finer and more delicate sentiments of their common nature, he must seek toward her, unless he would become stern in his strength, and his virile hardihood degenerate into harshness.

We know nothing finer in the whole range of literature than are some of the exhibitions of female character which are to be met with in the Scripture histories. As loving wife and devoted mother, she is seen shedding a hallowed loveliness around the household. The sires and sons of Israel, so noble patriots, heroes of dauntless bravery, men of action and of metal, in Israel's best days, went forth from homes where woman's worth was known, and woman's power admitted. It was *she*, as wife or mother, who made these sires and sons of Israel the men they proved themselves to be. But not only in the privacy of home is the Hebrew woman to be seen. She could step forth without forgetting her womanly modesty, in these stirring times, equal to deeds of valor which the veterans of the nation might have envied. She too was poetess, priestess, prophetess.

But above and beyond all, Christianity has ennobled woman as the mother of the Savior of mankind. If paradise has its melancholy shadows, in the gloom of which woman stands as the first transgressor, how gloriously are these shadows dispelled at Bethlehem. The nativity shines with a double luster for woman; the birth-hour of hope to her children, it was also the birth-hour of her own true dignity, henceforth to be acknowledged, wherever the Gospel should proclaim her, to be the mother of the Savior; and now is her benign influence being felt, as in pagan lands it never was, or indeed

could be, in the great work of universal civilization.

In estimating the contributions which Christianity has made toward a solution of the social problem, it deserves to be specially noted, that for it was reserved the inaugural act of public charity in the spirit of charity. With the poor, as such, heathenism did not trouble itself. The public largesses of corn which were made to the humbler citizens of Rome might seem to contradict this statement; but in point of fact they do not, for there was no vestige of charity in the Roman distributions of grain. "These distributions," says De Quincey, "moved upon the same impulse as the *sportulæ* of the great oligarchic houses, and the *donatives* of princely officers to their victorious soldiery upon great anniversaries, or upon accessions to the throne, or upon adoptions of successors, etc. All were political, oftentimes rolling through the narrowest grooves of intrigue, and so far from contemplating any collateral or secondary purpose of charity, that the most earnest inquiry on such occasions was to find pretexts for excluding men from the benefit of the bounty. The primary thought was, who should *not* be admitted to participate in the dole; and at any rate, none *were* admitted but citizens in the most rigorous and the narrowest sense." Public charity, the charity that grows out of tender and apprehensive sympathy with human sufferings, the charity that makes eleemosynary contributions to the poor

a solemn institution as their absolute right under the Christian law, the charity that proclaims it a paramount duty for all who have any available power, whether these be a community or individual members thereof, to listen to poverty pleading its pangs day and night before God and man—this public charity paganism knew nothing of; Christianity was the first to proclaim it, and a Christian emperor, Constantine, was the first to give to it practical effect. It was he, the first Christian Cæsar, who in testimony of that obligation which Christianity had laid on princes and their peoples, founded the first system of relief for pauperism. "The poor ye will always have with you." These words of the Divine Founder of Christianity were now accepted as at once a true prediction and an authoritative appeal.

What Christianity, since the times of Constantine, has done for the poor, and how much it has contributed if not to remove poverty out of the land—which is only to be thought of in the dreams of the visionary—at any rate to mitigate its sufferings, is patent to any one who will read the annals of philanthropy.

There is still one other observation I would add, in speaking of Christianity in connection with civilization, or the true solution of the great social problem. It alone, of all religious systems, has shown itself to possess the power to work in coöperation with time and progress, and to adapt itself to the

endless variations of epochs and locality. Systems there have been which could grapple with one condition of society, with one set of feelings, and one system of ideas, but when there came a change, and new elements had to be dealt with, these systems, having no power of plastic self-accommodation, became as a bed on which a man can not stretch himself; there was in them neither the length nor the breadth required by these new aspects of society, and of these new necessities of man. But Christianity has in it an infinite flexibility; it transfers itself, without needing to be stretched as a garment which has shrunk, from climate to climate, from land to land, from century to century, infolding within its endless adaptations the social problem, no matter where, when, or under what conditions, it is being solved.

CHAPTER III.

THE BIBLE THE PROMOTER OF LITERATURE AND THE ARTS—MODERN POETRY.

THERE are influences with power in them sufficient to initiate a movement, but which are not capable of consummating it. They give the first impulse, and then are left behind by that which themselves set in motion. This is abundantly illustrated in the history of science, philosophy, and literature. For many a book which exerted no small motive influence on the age when it first appeared, and perhaps on the age which succeeded, became at length antiquated, having fallen quite behind the very progress which in large measure might be traced to itself. Indeed the number of the books is exceedingly few, of which it could be said that they both commenced and consummated any great movement. Extremely few, at the most not over two or three, which, having served as a primer to the infancy of human thought, are still a sufficient "principia" for its manhood. Among these very few books the Bible stands out preëminent. Any other on the short but shining list is "*secundus magno intervallo.*" The date of centuries, but not the decay of age is upon it. The first

to lead forth the human mind in the long quest after truth, it still keeps in the vanguard. Its vocation to man, as the child of immortality, is to press onward. Its own motto, woven as with lines of light on its every page, is *meliora*. Striking back to the eldest antiquity of our planet's history, it has stretched forward to its still uncircled periods; and as it moved on the past, so will it move on the future; for what it pioneers it promotes, what it commences it consummates. In sweeping the descending segment of its arc of motion, the ball of a pendulum acquires a momentum which carries it up an almost isometrical ascending segment; and so might we say it is likely to be the case with the Bible. It has been gathering a momentum or motive power in sweeping down the curve of the past, which will carry it forward through an equal curve in the future, if the earth last so long.

I am now to indicate some of the services which the Bible has rendered toward the advancement of the higher arts and literature. But how may I hope adequately to discourse my theme? For were modern poetry to indite a thanksgiving hymn; and modern painting to hang up a commemorative picture; and modern sculpture to erect a memorial pillar; and modern music to compose an oratorio; and modern literature to write a eulogy, in acknowledgment of the services which the Bible has rendered to each of them; it would require the muse of a Milton to indite the hymn, the pencil of an

Angelo to paint the picture, the chisel of a Canova to sculpture the pillar, the symphonies of a Handel to swell the oratorio, and the pen of an Addison to write the eulogy.

Still, however inadequately, my subject requires of me that I shall essay the task of pointing out what services, not merely now as their pioneer, but as their promoter, the Bible has rendered to letters and the arts in the civilized nations of modern Europe. There will have to pass in review before us, poetry, painting, sculpture, music, architecture, and general literature; for by each of these has this marvelous book made its influence to be felt. We shall find that it has breathed into them a new life from its own undying vitality; that it has supplied them with materials out of its own exhaustless stores; that mixing as it were its own nurturing influences at their very roots, to it mainly is owing, even when the connection has ceased to be perceptible, that their branches have so widely burgeoned, blossomed, and borne fruit.

To the Bible modern poetry is under many obligations.

(1.) It has supplied it with subjects of song.

For if it is asked, in the first instance, Where have the great masters of the lyre, the high-priests of poesy's temple, her bards of the epic song, turned for subjects befitting their lofty muse? we reply, to the Bible. There at least, did he, most gifted of them all, find a theme equal to the immensity of

his imagination and the wide sweep of his poetic vision. For long years must the lofty genius which produced the *Allegro* and *Penseroso*, have been revolving some still nobler monument to its poetic fame. And when it at length essayed to build the grandest epic the world has ever seen, the subject it selected is emphatically a Biblical one. Had Moses not penned the Pentateuch, Milton could never have written "Paradise Lost." And on his, a second time, essaying the epic, he wrote "Paradise Regained," thereby confessing that his themes could be found only in the Bible. There is a grand unity of idea in these two epics; and it was a fine tribute which the poet paid to the Scriptures, when, having found what we might call the first half of his great thought in the Old Testament, he turned to the New Testament, as if only there he could find the other half. The Bible completes itself—so reckoned Milton; and therefore to the Bible he turned for the completion of his epical idea. Nor could this great master of the divine art attempt the drama but he must betake himself to the Scriptures for a subject; and thus appeared his "Samson Agonistes." Or if we turn to the poets of Italy, and it is asked, What has given its so solemn tone to the muse of Dante, and kindled his poetry with so prophetic a fervor? the answer plainly is, that it could only be his high appreciation of the writers of the Old Testament. This poet's ardent admiration of the learning of the

ancients has too often betrayed him into blending the ancient mythologies with the sacred writings; but at the same time the profounder impression which the latter had made on his imagination may be traced on every page of his "Inferno." Although Tasso's great epic is not a Biblical subject, yet does it owe its peculiar interest to its scene being laid in a land which the Bible has rendered sacred ground. Jerusalem! rich above all other cities in hallowed recollections—brilliant beyond comparison from its association with all our religious feelings—near it lying the cradle of the human race—its environs, the haunts of inspired bards—itself the city which God chose for his residence during his incarnate life on earth—how could Tasso's muse sing of its deliverance, and not be kindled with somewhat of the solemn fervor, and sustained by a measure of the awful grandeur of its own ancient bards? Tasso paid a still more direct tribute to the Bible—though his muse failed to sustain her former wing—by composing a Christian epic on the Creation. The epoist of Germany could not indeed soar in the eye of the sun, like our English Milton; yet as reverently as he, Klopstock has done homage to the Bible by selecting from it the subject of his "Messiah." And whether the "Course of Time," by Pollok, shall be admitted to be an epic, yet must it be confessed to be a wonderful poem as the production of one so young in years; nor can yet the reader fail to perceive that

the altar-flame which might be said, alas! too literally to have wasted this martyr of the muses, was kindled at the Scriptures. And we may here add that one, who, if he is not, might have been, a great poet, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, among his other unachieved projects, contemplated writing an epic poem; and the subject which he would have selected, as in his opinion the only one worthy to be sung after Paradise Lost, was the Destruction of Jerusalem—also a Biblical subject.

Here then we find the Epic muse, with the world of fiction all open to her range, and the pages of profane history spread out before her meditative eye; but not in that world of fiction, nor on those pages of profane history, could she find her fitting subjects. For she must sing of themes more fair than this unfolds, and of events more grand than these record. But where, then, shall she find such? where but in the book of God?

Among our poets who have touched the loftier strings of the lyre, though they scarcely ventured into the region of the epic, not a few have chosen Biblical subjects, or subjects which the Bible suggested. These, too, in the measure of their genius, have thus done homage to the Book Divine. So Spenser wrote his *Faëry Queen*, whose allegory is traced all through, thick as cloth of gold, with figures borrowed from the robes of the Hebrew muse. So also Herbert, the poet-pastor, wrote his *Temple*, which, though bright with quaint conceits

and fantastic imagery, after the fashion of his time, has, withal, a holy beauty and magnificence which are quite Scriptural. So also Giles Fletcher wrote his *Christ's Victory and Triumph*, a poem which evidently gave hints to Milton when composing his second epic. So also from the Scriptures were drawn some of the happiest inspirations of the poetry of Donne, rugged, yet fancy-rich; of Philip Quarles, so quaintly emblematic; of Richard Crashaw, over much tinctured with superstition's melancholy, yet often rising into "lyric raptures;" of Cowley, too, by turns easy, gay, witty, subtile, splendid, albeit somewhat fantastic and extravagant; and of Parnell, picturesquely solemn as its own hermit's haunts, yet melodious in the rhythm of its numbers as the wood-notes in the anchorite's grove. So also, among our later poets, Cowper has sung of *Hope, Truth, Charity;* Graham of the *Sabbath;* Blair of the *Grave;* Heber of *Palestine;* Montgomery of the *World before the Flood;* Michael Bruce of the *Last Day.*

Nor could our poets who touched more seldom the sacred lyre refrain from at times waking up its strings to Biblical subjects. Thus the eagle-eyed but vulture-breasted muse of Byron has sung the *Hebrew Melodies;* the romantic muse of Scott has kindled into more than its wonted passion in the Hymn of the *Hebrew Maid;* the all but voluptuous muse of Moore has warbled with a spiritual

note in the *Song of Miriam;* the polished muse of Pope has caught the fire of the olden prophets in the *Messiah;* and the wayward muse of Burns, random-roving as a very child of Nature, has struck its Doric note, the sweetest to our taste it ever sung, in the *Cotter's Saturday Night.* And how can we refrain from adding the remark, that if these favorite sons of our national muse, more especially Byron and Burns, had oftener tuned the lyre to similar strains, and less often to those they have preferred, then might modesty have sometimes been spared a blush, passion sometimes a pang, and youthful desire sometimes a temptation; while the laurels on their own gifted brows would have sparkled with the dew-drops of immortality, unmingled with the tears shed by those who have had to lament the hours worse than wasted over some of their, alas, too fascinating pages!

Then there is our hymnology, which has been charged as wanting in the fervid lyric strain, and the nervous sinew of the true hymn. And so, mayhap, it is, yet who will not own it to be redolent of all gentlest and softest emotions; harping out the soul's sweet love to Him who is the friend of sinners; breathing a chastened rapture, a subdued passion, a quiet devoutness. Yes, with all their defects, we could ill afford to want these sacred lays. The young and the poor in the land, at least, would miss them. And whence have these streams

of holy song been drawn? They have been drawn from the Bible; for had not its inspired song first flowed forth from Sion's hill and Siloa's brook, our sacred literature would never have been enriched with the hymns of an Addison, a Cowper, a Newton, a Toplady, a Watts, a Montgomery, a Heber, a Bernard Barton, or a Henry Kirke White; nor would the literature of Germany have felt the benign influence of the hymns of Luther.

Here it merits to be noticed, that the earliest attempts of Anglo-Saxon poetry were upon Scriptural subjects. Cædmon, who was a poet of Nature's making, without the aids of education, so astonished his cotemporaries by his verse, that they all were of opinion that he had received the gift of song from heaven. Nor is it to be wondered at, if the learned scholastics of that age, who thought the vernacular tongue unfit even for prose, were smitten with marvel to hear it poured forth in not unmellifluous numbers, and on subjects so lofty as the Creation, by the unlettered monk of Whitby. It has been remarked—and I draw attention to the circumstance as showing the effect of a Biblical theme to refine and elevate the rustic muse, for Cædmon at one time had been a cow-herd—that his account of the Fall of Man is somewhat like that given in "Paradise Lost;" and that one passage in it might almost be supposed to have been the foundation of a corresponding one in Milton's sublime epic. It is that in which Satan is described

as reviving from the consternation of his overthrow.

(2.) But the Bible has done more than suggest subjects to our poets, it has also supplied them with *materials* for their art—with ideas, images, metaphors, references, and forms of expression. From Spenser downward, the Bible has been regarded as a sort of free common by the British muse, from which to borrow at will, and this has been done not by our minor poets only, but also by our great poets; perhaps oftenest of all by our three greatest, Spenser, Milton, and Shakspeare. Of the first of these it has been justly remarked by Dr. Maculloch, in his excellent little work on "The Literary Characteristics of the Bible," that "for his thoughts and imagery he is indebted, next to his own enchanting genius, to the treasures of Scripture. Some, indeed, of his most exquisite passages are but expansions—though most graceful and melodious expansions—of ideas borrowed from the sacred page." With regard to Milton, his "Paradise Lost" literally abounds in Biblical imitations, similitudes, references, and quotations. How freely he has drawn upon his vast stores of classical erudition to adorn his sacred epic must be known to every reader. But even to a still larger extent he has drawn upon the Hebrew classics. It is an observation by one of his commentators that "throughout the whole of 'Paradise Lost,' the author appears to have been a most critical reader and passionate admirer of Holy Scrip-

ture. He is indebted to Scripture infinitely more than to Homer and Virgil, and all other books whatever. Not only the principal fable, but all his episodes, are founded on Scripture. The Scripture has not only furnished him with the noblest hints, raised his thoughts, and fired his imagination, but has also very much enriched his language, given a certain solemnity and majesty to his diction, and supplied him with many of his choicest, happiest expressions." In his admirable critique on this great poem, Addison, while showing a fine appreciation of his author, has confessed that for many of his sublimest strokes he is indebted to the Scriptures. And when, moreover, one considers how much of the spirit of the Hebrew bards is interfused throughout this entire epic; how that the poet's own mind seems to have been steeped as it were in theirs; it might seem as if these were the Elijahs of ancient song, and he the Elisha of modern song, on whom their mantle had fallen. Our great dramatist, who is confessed the most original of the poets, has not seldom availed himself of the sacred Scriptures. I have lying before me a goodly volume of some two hundred pages octavo, published by a member of the Shakspeare Society, entitled, "Religious and Moral Sentences Culled from the Works of Shakspeare, compared with Sacred Passages drawn from Holy Writ." Some of the passages which this author quotes as references and imitations are somewhat far-fetched;

but after deducting such, there remains a full hundred of what appear to me to be unquestionable instances of Biblical imitation. It may gratify the reader if I give a few instances.

"Sluiced out his innocent soul, through streams of blood;
Which blood, like sacrificing Abel's, cries
. . . . . for justice."

"The sons of Edward sleep in Abraham's bosom."

"I tell thee, churlish priest,
A minist'ring angel shall my sister be,
When thou liest howling."

"If ever I were traitor,
My name be blotted from the Book of Life."

"It is as hard to come, as for a camel
To thread the postern of a needle's eye."

"The worm of conscience shall be-gnaw thy soul."

"What Eve, what serpent hath suggested thee,
To make a second fall of cursed man?"

"God saw him when he was hid in the garden."

"And this land be called
The field of Golgotha, and dead men's skulls."

"Did they not sometime cry, All hail! to me?
So Judas did to Christ."

"Whiles the mad mothers, with their howls confused,
Do break the clouds, as did the wives of Jewry
At Herod's bloody-hunting slaughtermen."

"O Thou that judgest all things! stay my thoughts,
If my suspect be false, forgive me, God,
For judgment only doth belong to thee."

"You drop manna in the way of starved people."

"You found his mote, the king your mote did see;
But I a beam do find in each of three."

"O! my offense is rank, it smells to heaven;
It hath the primal, eldest curse upon 't—
A brother's murder."

"Blessed are the peace-makers on earth."

"How fain, like Pilate, would I wash my hands
Of this most grievous, guilty murder done!"

"All the souls that were were forfeit once;
And he that might the vantage best have took,
Found out the remedy."

"Wisdom cries out in the streets, and no man regards it."

Dr. Spring, of New York, in his excellent lectures on "The Obligations of the World to the Bible," remarks: "There is not a finer character, nor a finer description in all the works of Walter Scott than that of Rebekah in Ivanhoe. And who does not see that it owes its excellence to the Bible? Shakspeare, Byron, and Southey, are not a little indebted for some of their best scenes and inspirations to the same source. At the suggestion of a valued friend, I have turned my thoughts to the parallel between Macbeth and Ahab—between Lady Macbeth and Jezebel—between the announcement to Macduff of the murder of his family, and that to David of the death of Absalom by Joab—to the parallel between the opening of the Lamentations of Jeremiah and Byron's apostrophe to Rome as the Niobe of nations—to the parallel between his Ode to Napoleon and Isaiah's ode on the fall of Sennacherib—and also to the resemblance between Southey's chariot of Carmala in the 'Curse of Ke-

hama' and Ezekiel's vision of the wheels; and have been forcibly impressed with the obligations of this class of writers to the sacred Scriptures." To this I would add, that one might imagine that Fletcher, in his "Purple Island," and Gawin Douglas, in his "King Heart," had in their eye Solomon's allegory in the closing chapter of Ecclesiastes.

Had our poets thus freely borrowed from any other book, without doubt the critics would have called it plagiarism, and have censured it accordingly as literary theft. But seeing it is only from the Bible, the critics have no fault to find; nor have we with them for their leniency. For whether the critics intended it or not, they could scarcely have paid a higher tribute to the literary affluence of the Bible. Other authors need to have their intellectual property protected, since they can ill afford to have their thoughts appropriated by others. But here is an amplitude of subject so large, a diversity of thought so various, a richness of illustration so exhaustless, and an originality so unquestionable, that this book, which borrows from none, can well afford to lend to all. And what imagination so lofty, but it finds here something grander than its own; or what fancy so fine, but here are images fairer than itself could draw; or what information so copious, but here it may find something new!

I have alluded to how much the poet's muse has been sustained by his choice of Scriptural subjects,

but if he shall not have proved true to the Scriptural treatment of the theme, it may be found that he has failed to reach the full altitude of his power. As illustrative of this, though the passage is of considerable length, I can not refrain from quoting at full the following from Landrith's "Studies and Sketches in Modern Literature:"

"The 'Last Man' is a theme foreign to Campbell's range, yet is treated with a grandeur and condensed energy of inspiration which, if not above his former capacity, had at least been latent hitherto. The scenery, the solitude, and the sentiments of the piece are impressively solemn, and in keeping with the peculiar situation of the 'last of Adam's race.' The poet, however, by disregarding Scripture hints about the last day, and by following out inferior and less suggestive ideas of his own, has failed to develop the proper sublimities of his subject. We shall briefly point out his deviations and their injurious effect. Why should he represent the last day of time as drawing upon only one man — the sole survivor of his race? It is not unlikely, indeed, that the population of the earth may then have been greatly reduced by the vice and crime which are to prevail between the millennium and the last day, still there will be left many 'peoples, races, and tongues' to furnish, as in the days preceding the flood, hosts of revelers, groups eating, drinking, marrying, and giving in marriage,' and jesting openly under the shadow of the

descending throne of the Judge. There is, doubtless, a certain impressiveness in the isolation of one man—the single remnant of humanity—in a world erewhile crowded, over all its surface of sea and land, with vast populations and their manifold activities; and striking is the picture of 'ships drifting with the dead to shores where all was dumb.' Still, the truth contained in divine prophecy has ever a richer and nobler poetry than belongs to any human fancy; and Campbell, in his deviation from that truth, left behind him greater treasures of sublimity than those which he could gather in his own path. Without sacrificing the sublimity wrapped up in the isolation of one man, he might also have availed himself of that which is naturally inspired by the presence of a whole generation in earth's most awful crisis; for might he not have put forth some grand embodiment of piety—a saintly man, separated from, protesting against, persecuted by, yet interceding for, his godless cotemporaries?

"Secondly, Why has Campbell reserved his 'last man' for the old and common doom of death, when according to Scripture, all who shall be living down to the day of judgment will be 'changed?' This transformation and its process would have furnished a new and grand scope for imagination.

"Again, Campbell represents the earth as in the last stage of decay, with every unequivocal symptom of immediate dissolution; whereas Scripture seems to intimate that the last day will dawn upon

a world that has lost none of its meridian vigor and splendor. Scoffers are to look to land, sea, and sky, and 'ask for the sign of His coming.' There will be no passing portents, much less such a perpetual warning as physical deterioration to correspond with moral degeneration. Now, had the poet adhered to the information of Scripture about such points, the sublimity of the piece would have been greatly enhanced."

(3.) But beside suggesting subjects and furnishing materials, the Bible has had an immense indirect influence in molding and coloring our poetic literature.

The function of every true poet is twofold—that of an interpreter and a prophet. As an interpreter, the poet has to articulate and expound the ideas of his own and of preceding ages. As a prophet, or—to use the Latin appellative—the *vates*, the poet has to utter his own ideas, which ought to be in advance of his age. The ideas which he has to interpret or give articulation to are certain impressions, wide-spread it may be, possibly deep-seated, yet voiceless till he gives them articulate utterance, when every one hears as if the echo of his own thoughts, and wonders why he could not have thus expressed them. The ideas which the poet has to contribute are those views of nature and of truth which his age may be groping toward, but sees them only as dim shadows till he gives them form, "a local habitation and a name." Now this being

the twofold function of the poet, it is easy to see how great an indirect influence the Bible must have exerted on our poetical literature; for in the first place it pervaded and imbued the popular mind, and the poet, catching by reflection the ideas of his age—ideas which the Bible had sent afloat—would set himself to shape them into verse, unconscious, it might be, whence they had come. Then, secondly, if the poet himself came into personal contact with the Bible—and who can conceive of a true poet not reading the pages of Isaiah and David?—then, owing to its assimilating power, and the poet's own susceptible temperament, there would be transferred to his soul its higher forms of thought and deeper moods of feeling, which, when he afterward shaped them into his own verse, would be but reflections from its pages, though he might not remember so. In this way the indirect influence which the Bible has exerted on our national poetry has been immense. Indeed it may be safely averred that there is not a single great English poet who has not given manifest proofs of the ascendency of the Hebrew genius over his own; how his thoughts, often his diction have assumed an Oriental cast; how the seeds of the great thoughts which have germinated in his mind had been wafted from the sacred gardens of Eastern poetry, and the pent fire which burned within him till it found vent in vocal flame, had been greatly fed by his perusal of the poet-prophets of Palestine. See, for example, how

conspicuously this is the case with Young, Thomson, Byron, Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Southey. The fire-flashes of that torch which, when waved in the hand of genius, could so light up the *Night Thoughts*, was kindled at the New Testament; the easy magnificence and lavish ornament in the *Seasons* betrays the ardent admirer of the Eastern pastorals; the daring imagination which penned *Cain, a Mystery*, must have gazed—would it had been with a holier eye—upon the awful mysteries of the inspired muse; the calm, contemplative soul of Wordsworth looked out on Nature and read her hidden hieroglyphs with an eye which evidently had been trained by the perusal of the poetic symbolism in the Bible; the solemn, seer-like, though unstable genius of Coleridge, which could pour itself in such a glorious hymn before sunrise in the Valley of Chamouni, was steeped till, like a saturated sponge, it dripped again with the poetry of ancient seers; and while Southey's *Thalaba* has somewhat too much "the arabesque ornament of an Arabian tale," and his *Curse of Kehama* overabounds in Hindoo mythology, yet one can not fail to perceive that the poet's eye, which ranged Araby and Ind, had also gazed on Palestine, whose bards, ages before he essayed his epics, had with Eastern imagery woven their own nobler specimens of Eastern song.

With a pardonable pride we boast our national poetry—that England has produced the greatest epoist and the greatest dramatist of any age, and

Scotland the finest lyrist and the finest song-writer of modern times. But why not at the same time confess, that if it is not to the Bible but to the accident of birth that England is indebted for her Milton and her Shakspeare, and Scotland for her Campbell and her Burns, it *is* to the Bible we owe it that among much which is of the earth earthy, there are in these, our nation's greatest poets, sentiments more refined, thoughts more lofty, subjects of a higher range, scintillations of a purer spark, strains of a truer human sympathy, images of a sublimer illustration, and the gold of genius assayed in a more searching crucible, than are to be found in the poets of pagan antiquity—the bards of those classic lands which were without the Bible?

CHAPTER IV.

THE BIBLE THE PROMOTER OF LITERATURE AND THE ARTS—MODERN PAINTING.

THE Bible might, indeed, be called the painter's book; for the picture galleries of Europe are hung with innumerable proofs that beyond all others it has furnished subjects for the pencil of the artist. The *chef-d'œuvres* of Raphael, of Angelo, of Titian, Correggio, Murillo, Leonardi, Rubens, Rembrandt, Poussin, indeed of all the great masters, are Biblical subjects. Though of diverse schools, and in different countries, with singular unanimity, as if drawn by one common impulse, our great painters have turned to the Scriptures for those subjects which were most to immortalize their own fames and ennoble their art.

Under the hand of genius the canvas has been made to express tenderness the most melting, and passion of the fiercest flame; sublimity in its grandest forms; the fortitude of martyrs; the love and constancy of woman; the heroic deeds of the most renowned in arms; the sweetest pictures of domestic life; the most appalling images of desolation and woe. But where did the great painters go for those incidents, those characters, and those groups,

which were to enable them to represent these by their imitative art? Did they go for them to Greek or Roman story, full as this is with the chivalry of war, with the fortitude of patriotism, with the triumphs of eloquence, the passion of love, the romance of adventure, and the grand vicissitudes of nations? No; not so often to these great histories, though the classic pens of a Herodotus and a Thucydides, of a Livy and a Tacitus, had memorialized them; but to the Hebrew historians did the painters go for their subjects. Only there could they find their high ideal of the sublime, the pathetic, the tender, or the terrible. Only there was realized their full conception of the warrior, the patriot, the prophet, and the saint. Rapt into the past of Jewish history, the Genius of Painting confessed herself supplied with themes worthy of her immortal labors.

As I shall have occasion to remark, ere the close of this chapter, the younger masters go less frequently to the Bible for their subjects than the elder masters were wont to do. Yet we find the former occasionally drawn to the Scriptures, as if the Genius of Painting in no age could altogether abstain from this great repertory of loftiest subjects. Among our English artists we have several fine specimens of sacred painting. I would instance "Christ Lamenting over Jerusalem," by Sir Charles Eastlake. In this charming work the touching sensibilities of the theme are brought out with a matchless power, pathos, and poetry. I would also

instance "Job and his Friends," by Poole. Here we have a specimen of religious art which is strikingly original, affording proof how impressive a Biblical subject can be made, when, as this artist does, it is treated differently from the current tone of conventionality. I would also instance the Scripture landscapes of Martin, which may be said to form a class by themselves, and to realize the most terrible of the Old Testament scenes. A competent critic has pronounced that "the supernatural splendor of the 'Handwriting on the Wall,' and 'Joshua Commanding the Sun to stand Still,' can never pass from the mind of any one with either imagination or feeling."

There is a living painter, not the least bright luminary of the Northern Academy, who has given us the results of his pencil in a walk of art, which, if not strictly Biblical, yet is of that religious cast which is clearly traceable to the Bible. Mr. Harvey has illustrated, with the power of a master, the theological history of Scotland. Throwing his sympathies backward into the struggles for conscience' sake which were maintained by his countrymen in by-gone times, he has reared a pictorial monument to men who had received the still higher fame of martyrdom as the heroes of the Covenant. Drawn by a like sympathy to the corresponding struggles in England, he has memorialized the heroic deeds and martyr endurances of the Puritans. Such noble pictures as "Covenanters Preaching," "Covenanters'

Baptism," "Covenanters' Communion," "First Reading of the Bible in the Crypt of St. Paul's," "Bunyan in Bedford Jail," and "Sabbath in the Glen," strike an inmost chord in the breast of every lover of art and of the Bible.

What we take to be perhaps a still higher tribute was paid by the great painters to the Bible, when seeking not only for subjects which were worthy of their art, but also for subjects which would enable them to display their own peculiar powers, they still went to it in preference to other sources. Let me illustrate this in the case of four great masters, who stand perhaps unrivaled, each in his own peculiar style—Leonardi da Vinci, Michael Angelo, Raphael, and Rembrandt. Though the first of these great painters could excel also in depicting rapid motion and impetuous action—as witness the whirlwind charge of his horsemen in the celebrated cartoon for Florence—yet his greater strength lay in depicting tranquil sublimity, solemn grandeur, and pathetic grace. Conscious of his peculiar power, Leonardi sought for a subject on which he could fully display it; and, as if guided by the instinct of his genius, he turned to the New Testament, and selecting therefrom the *Last Supper*, has produced at once his greatest and most characteristic work. The very boldest conception, grandeur of form, and breadth of manner, are the elements of Michael Angelo's style. The imagination of this mighty genius, who has been called the inventor

of epic painting, delighted in the union of magnificence of plan with endless variety of subordinate parts, and of the utmost simplicity with the greatest breadth. He too sought for a subject which would exercise his peculiar powers; and guided by the instinct of his genius to the New Testament, he selected therefrom the *Last Judgment*, and produced that marvelous painting, in which, as Fuseli observes, "he has personified every attribute that varies the human body, and traced the master trait of every passion that sways the human heart." The genius of Raphael, who has been designated the father of dramatic painting, though not less lofty, was milder than that of Angelo. He too might have painted a Last Judgment; but to represent some milder glory on the earth better suited his style. Seeking for a subject in the full maturity of his powers, the instinct of his genius led him also to the New Testament, from which he selected the *Transfiguration*. And though death smote the hand of the mighty master ere yet it had given the finishing touches to this noble work, it remains the most perfect masterpiece that modern art has produced. The head of Christ, which is said to have been the painter's last labor, is his mightiest triumph. None but Raphael's pencil could have painted, and nowhere but from Scripture could Raphael's genius have got the conception of such a head. Infinitely beneath those three in all that pertains to form, Rembrandt excels them, as indeed

all others, in this profound knowledge of harmony in coloring, and in his management of the lights and darks, technically called *chiaroscuro*. And he too, guided by the instinct of his genius, went to the Bible for those subjects which afforded a field for the display of his peculiar power. Thus he frequently handled the Nativity; and if the reader has happened to see his picture in the National Gallery, he will have perceived how such a subject gave full scope to this master of coloring. The glory emanating from the Divine infant, and the lantern in the hand of the shepherd, together with the light in the background having some source not comprised within the limits of the picture, have enabled the painter to distinguish between the supernatural and natural light, and the various gradations of both, with that exquisite effect which he alone could produce.

The reader will probably have heard of the Bowyer Bible. I transcribe the following description of it from one of our periodicals, because it will serve to show to how very great an extent our artists had selected Biblical subjects: "William Bowyer is now chiefly remembered in connection with one particular copy of the Bible. Macklin ventured on the most costly edition of the Bible ever issued from the press; and Bowyer, possessing one copy of this work, devoted the leisure of nearly thirty years to illustrating it. He procured from every part of Europe engravings, etchings, and

original drawings relating to Biblical subjects; and these, to the number of *seven thousand*, he interleaved with his Bible. From Michael Angelo and Raffaelle to Reynolds and West, every artist whose Scripture subjects had been engraved was brought into requisition. Bowyer, having only his own taste to please, gave a very wide scope to the words 'Scriptural' and 'Biblical,' insomuch that he included plates of natural history that *might* possibly illustrate the cosmogony of the Bible. The collection included the best Scripture atlases. Its most original features were two hundred drawings by Lautherbourg. Thus he went on, step by step, till his Bible extended to forty-five folio volumes, including examples from nearly six hundred different engravers."

The history of modern painting abundantly illustrates this important fact, that as the spirit of Christianity spread and interfused European civilization, the fine arts expanded with it, and for the first time since the decline of ancient art, began to feel an inspiration which lifted them into the region of poetry and sentiment. Without introducing subject of polemical discussion, which needs have no place on these pages, it is but simple justice to own that the Church of Rome proved herself the liberal patroness of painting; and that to the devotion with which she inspired the early masters is in chief measure owing the amazing progress which it made; for with them painting was not

merely an art, but the consecration of genius to the service of religion. Having said this much in praise, truth constrains us to add, that if the Church of Rome greatly helped the art, she also greatly hampered the artist. For there is no denying that a false ecclesiastical taste, with the rage for bizarre coloring which was caused by a sensuous creed and a showy ritual, too much tied down the early masters to the conventionalism of Church-art. These were fetters, however, which could not always bind the spirit or cramp the hand of genius.

The great event of modern times is the Reformation; and as this was connected with the dissemination of the Scriptures, and with the right claimed for every man to read them and judge for himself, it falls within our subject to inquire what effect the Reformation had upon the progress of art, more especially painting. Your dilettante, or mere lover of art, whom a fine painting would please more than a pure faith, is loud in his lament, that from the rise of the reformed religion we must date the downfall of art, more especially that painting, whose sun shone in its zenith, was then eclipsed; and he has no terms strong enough in which to denounce what he considers the vandalism of the Reformers. Now let us see what truth there is in this accusation, or what ground for this lament.

If the leaders of the Reformation were slow to patronize and commend the fine arts, it ought to be

remembered how greatly these arts had been abused. They were not the men to object to fine pictures, *as such*. Luther, we should take it, possessed more love for music than to be destitute of all relish for painting. He was too deeply imbued with a passion for classic learning to be a Goth in his tastes. Even although the works of the great masters had been produced under the fostering care of Popery, and savored not a little of her errors; still, had these adorned the walls of the palaces, the senate halls, the public buildings, and private mansions, the Reformers were not the men who would have wished them destroyed. But when these were hung upon the walls of the sanctuaries, and round the altars, not merely for decoration, but to be helps to worship, it is not surprising if the regenerators of the Church cared less to preserve these monuments of art, than to make sure that the temple was purged. Considering the use to which these paintings were put, and the idolatrous tendencies which that use fostered, if even with their own hands the Reformers had destroyed them, we should not have charged them with being Goths and Vandals, but would have called them Iconoclasts—no great term of reproach if literally rendered—*idol*-breakers. It is, however, simply a gratuitous accusation to say that the Reformers wantonly destroyed the works of art; for we know that when the enthusiasm—or if any reader wills, the fanaticism—of the multitude carried them the length of

demolishing the cathedrals in Scotland, Knox interposed to save more than one of these noble monuments of architecture. Then, further, men who awoke as from the sleep of ages—awoke to find that the work to which they were called was nothing less than to emancipate the human mind from spiritual thrall and intellectual serfdom—such men, with such a work on their hands, had little time, and we shall even suppose no great inclination for the cultivation or patronage of the fine arts. These had been made to twine voluptuous fetters around more than merely the taste and the imagination. Reason and faith had been fastened in their attractive chains. No wonder, then, if for a time the stern eye of Truth looked suspiciously upon them; and Liberty, with her hardy hand, was not over gentle when snatching them away.

As to the lament that at the Reformation painting suffered an eclipse, we are free to own that to a certain extent this was the case. We have already hinted at causes which could not fail to produce this effect. But then the eclipse was neither total nor permanent. It has been seen how the Bible, when comparatively an unknown book, had contributed to raise painting to what it was in the fifteenth and beginning of the sixteenth centuries; and without surprise the reader will hear that the Bible had not lost its power to benefit art by its being disseminated among the people. There are certain influences which lose in depth and mo-

mentum of current, in proportion as they gain of surface by diffusion. But the Bible is not among these. In proof of this may fairly be adduced the service which, since the Reformation, it has rendered to painting. For it is not saying too much, that the restoration of this art is in no small measure to be attributed to the Bible.

We venture to avow the opinion, that under Protestantism a healthier school of painting has risen than that which arose under Catholicism. The pictorial art, if less than formerly the illustrator of religion, has become more the interpreter of Nature, which we take to be its more appropriate function. Now that love of Nature, which is one of the first attributes in a true painter, is greatly encouraged by the Scriptures, as we had occasion to show when treating of the picturesque. Then, further, the opportunity of contemplating Nature under her various aspects, and in her different climes, is unquestionably a result of that individual freedom which we owe to the Reformation. If cloistered seclusion was favorable to one branch of the art—that in which the elder masters excelled—there was another branch not less deserving cultivation, which can be studied only where the more modern masters are studying it—in the open fields, by the river's banks, in sight of the forest and mountain ranges, on the ocean shore, in the thoroughfares of every-day busy life; and if it be so that our later painters go less frequently to the Bible for their subjects

than did the earlier, there seems small reason to regret this; rather we incline to think that there had been about enough of the Scriptures transferred to canvas. We deem it to be a higher function of sacred art, at any rate one which is greatly more useful, to produce works which shall breathe the spirit, rather than be copies of the letter of the Bible. This function of sacred art modern painting is beginning to fulfill; and then, moreover, there are those simpler tastes, that more refined sentiment, in which the Bible, since it came to be more widely circulated, has so greatly helped to educate the general mind; and thus does it lend its stimulating aid to the painter, who has to strive to produce such works as will meet this improved state of things. We can not therefore join the dilettante in his extravagant regrets about the eclipse of painting at the Reformation. For no more than is the sun quenched by the transit shadow, was the glory of art permanently dimmed when the passing obscuration had gone by.

It is no doubt true that the Protestant Church has not been, and never can be, the same liberal patron of high art which the Catholic Church had proved herself to be. But is this really to be regretted? Is the Church the safest patron of art? Does her patronage leave it altogether free? For while true genius will not bribe, it may from an over devotedness cease to be independent. The painter must work like other men for his daily

bread; and if he has lost his most liberal paymaster in losing the Church, we are not sure but that, after a season of struggle, he will find as liberal purchasers, who will cramp him less in his choice of subjects than did the priesthood; while his devotion to his art, *as such*, if the talent is in him, will in the long end make him more purely a painter. To be thrown upon his own resources, to win for his art-works the appreciation of art-education, must have the the effect of testing what is in him. So that in course of time there will be little cause to regret the loss of Church patronage. The public will be safer patrons in the end than the priests.

The question will naturally be asked: To what extent has sacred painting contributed to illustrate the meaning of Scripture? Has it had any great exegetical value? To this question we feel some measure of perplexity what answer to give. The point is one on which there will be differences of opinion. For our own parts, we rather incline to be of opinion that sacred painting has not to any great extent elucidated the text of Scripture. Doubtless there are certain of the Bible scenes and characters, of which one can not fail to have a more vivid and larger impression after having looked on the pictorial delineations which some of the great masters have given of them. We confess to have felt this ourselves, with regard to the Deluge, the Nativity, and the Descent from the Cross, when helped by the representations of Poussin, Rem-

brandt, and Rubens. Still, in any such picture, all we can have is the individual conception of the artist; simply his rendering or interpretation of the Scriptural idea, which may be wide enough of the original facts. A more solemn and subduing representation of a deluge we could not well conceive than Poussin has painted. But, then, is it a representation of the Noachian Deluge? Was there that solitary serpent trailing up the rock from the edge of the rising flood? Or was there that infant child, which seems to press its naked foot against the face of that other rock, as if to assist its exhausted mother, who, erect in the rocking boat, is endeavoring to hand up this weakling to its father, who has gained an upper ledge? We gazed, awe-struck, as upon *a* deluge; still the question came, was such *the* deluge which the Scriptures record? Nor will it deny that many even of the greatest masters have given a wider license to their fancy than the sobriety of the subject justified. We are not sure, therefore, if to any very great extent the Scriptures have been indebted to sacred painting. It is not the less true, however, on this account, that painting has been under unspeakable obligation to the Scriptures. If to small extent they have been its debtor, to a very large extent they have been its benefactor. For have we not seen that it has supplied the artist with a class of subjects, which, though he might not be able to treat them with literal correctness to the original, did call forth his

highest powers, and stimulate his genius, as subjects of another class or style would not have done? Nor have our great masters been slow to own this. They have shown what a deep hold the Bible had taken on their imaginations, and how, more than any other book, they found it replete with suggestive themes.

CHAPTER V.

THE BIBLE THE PROMOTER OF LITERATURE AND THE ARTS—MODERN SCULPTURE AND MUSIC.

Less perhaps than her sister arts, Poetry and Painting, has Sculpture borrowed her subjects from the Bible. One reason of this may be found in the nature of the art itself, which does not admit of an equal range of subject with poetry or even painting. Another reason may have been, that numerous specimens of ancient statuary, while scarcely any ancient pictures, have been handed down to us; the canvas having decayed while the marble has endured. Hence it has happened that whereas the moderns had to strike out a new path for themselves in painting, in sculpture they made it their ambition rather to copy the classic models.

This last remark, however, does not apply to the earliest sculptures of British growth which time has spared us. For these were not imitations of the classic models, but are essentially Gothic, with nothing of the Grecian in their form, their grouping, or their character. As works of art these betray manifold defects in drawing, anatomy, and composition. Yet though they were finished before the birth of Cimabue—the Chaucer of art—they exhibit a bold-

ness of conception and an irresistible sentiment, which are not always to be found in more modern productions. And how are we to account for this? whence such high attributes in works so early? It is doubtless owing to the subjects which the artists made choice of. And after saying this, the reader will not be surprised to hear that these subjects were selected from the Scriptures. It was the themes of inspiration which, by their own sublimity and lofty sentiment, sustained the unskilled chisel of infant art; so that if it carved but rudely, yet were its compositions bold, impressive, and exalted. Speaking of the Cathedral of Wells, which was built by Bishop Joceline in the thirteenth century, Flaxman, confessedly a competent judge, says, "The west front of this church equally testifies the piety and comprehension of the Bishop's mind. The sculpture presents the noblest, most useful, and interesting subjects possible to be chosen. On the south side, above the west door, are alto-relievos of the creation, in its different parts, together with the deluge, and important acts of the patriarchs. Companions to these, on the north side, are alto-relievos of the principal circumstances in the life of our Savior. Above these are two rows of statues, larger than nature, in niches, of kings, queens, and nobles, patrons of the Church, saints, bishops, and other religious persons, from its first foundation to the reign of Henry the Third. Near the pediment is our Savior come to judgment, attended

by angels, and the twelve apostles. The upper arches on each side, along the whole of the west front, and continued in the north and south ends, are occupied by figures rising from their graves, strongly expressing the hope, fear, astonishment, stupefaction, or despair, inspired by the presence of the Lord and Judge of the world in that awful moment." With regard therefore to medieval sculpture we are entitled to pronounce that whatever of *idealistic* merit it possesses is owing to the Scriptures.

I have said that it was too much the ambition of modern sculptors to emulate the works of the ancient; when emulation would often degenerate into mere imitation—in this case an imitation of the Greeks' dead mythology and untranslatable ideal. But it was not possible that true genius should not at times aspire to originality. And the remarkable fact is, that when the great masters turned aside from the classic models, to strike into a path of their own, they went to the Scriptures for their subjects. How replete with the spirit and materials of high art must that book be, of which it is not exaggeration to say that it contributed to raise modern sculpture to an original art.

It were tedious to enumerate all the eminent sculptors who, while doing homage to the Bible, have immortalized their own fame. Suffice to mention the names of Ghiberti, Donatello, Angelo, Canova, Thorwaldsen, and Flaxman. So long as an admiring posterity shall repeat the praises of these

great ornaments of modern art, to Christianity will belong no small measure of the applause; for it was it which fired them with the noble ambition to perpetuate, in the productions of their chisel, those images of grandeur and of beauty with which it had filled their enraptured vision. The during marble is at once a monument of their genius and a tribute to its sublimer inspiration. And it is indeed a marvelous thing in the history of art that a book, great part of which was written long before sculpture was known even in Greece, should, centuries after Greece had ceased to exist as a nation, begin to make its influence be felt on the genius and the taste of reviving art.

Michael Angelo, striving to excel all his other efforts—not excepting among these his *Pieta*—did well to consecrate his chisel to a Scripture theme; for his *Moses* stands forth a monument of statuary isolated and inimitable by the peculiar nature of its own especial sublimity. And Canova, aspiring to excel in the pathetic of his art, did also well to go to the Bible for his subject; for in his *Repentant Magdalene* he has succeeded in carrying the expression of the melting and the soft to the highest degree: the very marble seems to relax under the effect of penitence, till you could imagine it to be no cold statue, but the very Mary whose gushing tears bathed the feet of Him who had forgiven her. And Thorwaldsen, when commissioned to execute a work worthy to be set up in his native city, did

also well to select a Christian theme; for so long as the colossal group of Christ and the Apostles adorns Copenhagen it may boast the possession of the masterpiece of its illustrious son. And Flaxman, who of all our Biblical sculptors is admitted to have had the loftiest genius, did also well to consecrate his chisel to designs from Scripture, for by none other of his works has this artist so immortalized his name. What was it led these great masters of statuary to the Bible for the subjects of their highest efforts? We reply it was the same which had led the great masters of painting also to the Bible for their loftier subjects—the instinct of their genius. To the volume of inspiration they were drawn by that instinctive homage which true greatness is ever inclined to pay to greatness. In them was the power to embody in visible forms the grand ideal of beauty and sublimity. And where were they to find that ideal? Their genius, laboring in vain to find it elsewhere, sought it and found it in the Bible. Nor is this strange. The Bible is not a book on art; but its author is that Divine artist who has chiseled with his own infinite, matchless skill the statuary of nature—the grand, the beautiful, the sublime ornaments which adorn the temple of the universe.

We hear a great deal of the immense superiority of ancient over modern sculpture, and in one respect it was immensely superior; for in the delineation of form the Greek sculptors have been but remotely

approached by the moderns. They had acquired the seemingly-lost art of chiseling in marble the perfect idealization of beauty; but then it was for the most part merely physical beauty. And when they essayed the representation of the passions, they generally confined themselves to those which we are apt to consider among the lowest of our nature. Pure sentiment they rarely thought of sculpturing. You meet with the statue of a dying gladiator or the group of a Laocoön, but never with a statue of Philanthrophy, or Patience, or Mercy. Their Graces were not Faith, Hope, Charity, but merely three beautiful females who attended the voluptuous goddess of love. Now mere form, however poetical its idealization, addresses itself only to the lower or sensuous faculties of our nature, whereas sentiment appeals to the higher emotions of the soul, and stirs the better feelings of the heart. The sculptors of the *Renaissance* followed the example of the Greeks and Romans to a considerable extent, combining with it, however, in some of their works, a more elevated and a purer moral feeling. Those of our own time have advanced still further the latter qualities; while bearing in mind that beauty of form constitutes the highest charm of sculpture, so far as the eye is addressed, they rightly assume that it is also capable, by the representation of sentiment, of eliciting the best sympathies of the heart. And in this, the nobler function of high art, we venture to be of opinion that the modern sculp-

tors excel the ancient. It may not be theirs to chisel the marble into forms so exquisitely beautiful, yet do they breathe into it, cold stone as it is, more of pure sentiment and warm feeling. Their statuary may not so please the eye, but it more directly touches the heart. If one is less enchanted as he gazes, the fault is in his own heart if he is not more softened and subdued.

In proof of this assertion, I venture to instance the "Suppliant," by Weekes. The sentiment of this group is a direct appeal to the holiest of moral virtues, charity. The mother, pleading less for herself than her young child which hangs so helpless on her arm, goes at once to the heart. Not equal to this, perhaps, as a piece of sculpture, I would instance "Innocence—the Dove," by Spence. We very much question whether the idea of representing innocence would even have entered the mind of a Greek sculptor; and we more than question if he would have represented it with so simple and touching sentiment.

It does not need, however, that we draw a comparison between the moderns and the ancients in our attempt to illustrate the services which the Bible has rendered to art; for the question we have to do with is not whether Phidias was a greater sculptor than Angelo, or Praxiteles than Canova; but the question is this, Whether Angelo and Canova would have been the great sculptors they are, except for the elevating effect of Christianity on their

genius? and whether Phidias and Praxiteles would not have been still greater sculptors than they were, had their genius been sanctified by that book which alone reveals the truly fair and truly good? Nature made the Greeks great sculptors without the Bible, but with its aid would they not have been still greater? Nature has not made the moderns their equals; but would they have come so near to an equality if, along with Nature, they had not had the aid of the Bible?

MODERN MUSIC HAS BEEN GREATLY INDEBTED TO THE BIBLE.

How far, or whether to any extent, the New Testament sanctions the use of instrumental music in public worship, is a question upon which opinion is divided; but there can be no difference of opinion that it enjoins vocal psalmody. Accordingly it has been the immemorial practice of the Christian Church to make "the voice of praise" a part of its religious service; and to such practice is doubtless owing the high advancement to which the art of music has reached, as well as the spread of a taste for it among the common people. In many parts of Scotland the very peasantry may be heard pouring forth the natural eloquence of music in some of our national psalm-tunes:

> "They chant their artless notes in simple guise;
> They tune their hearts—by far the noblest aim:
> Perhaps Dundee's wild-warbling measures rise,
> Or plaintive Martyrs—worthy of the name—
> Or noble Elgin beats the heavenward flame,
> The sweetest far of Scotia's holy lays."

Sacred to our hearths, and still more sacred in the history of our persecuted forefathers, when on moorland or mountain-side these plaintive melodies would mingle with the winds of heaven and the curlew's note in the sky-arched temple, to which lyart warriors and delicate maidens were driven forth to worship God—how dear to Scotland are her old national psalm-tunes, which, human compositions though they be, are worthy to have been wedded to the words of inspired song!

In its higher forms, music, not less than poetry, and in the same way, has been indebted to the Bible, since from it have been borrowed the subjects of the magnificent oratorios of our greatest composers. These masters of symphony could find nowhere, except in the Bible, adequate themes in which to discourse their matchless melodies. The soul of music seemed to be straitened, its voice but as a broken utterance, till at length, finding expression in Scriptural themes, and almost in the very words of Scripture, it broke forth from the lips of a Handel, a Mozart, a Haydn, and a Beethoven, into those immortal oratorios—Creation, Samson, Elijah, The Messiah, The Mount of Olives.

Now at length had the genius of music found her voice, and as she pours forth her solemn symphonies, they seem to repeat the echoes of those lyric strains which mingled with the sound of the returning waves of Egypt's divided sea; or the echoes of those sublime choral melodies which woke

the arches of Zion's temple. And while we would not be thought to approve of the sacred oratorio being employed as a means of mere amusement, yet, were fitting occasions sought—such as seasons of national thanksgiving, when the people in these lands might listen to its soul-subduing peals—few things, in our opinion, would contribute more to elevate their tastes and enliven their devotion.

There is still another branch of the arts, namely, Architecture, regarding which, in its connection with the Bible, a few words may be said. We do not assign to it a section by itself, because it can scarcely be said of it that it has borrowed its designs, as painting and sculpture have their subjects, from the Bible. There is, no doubt, to be found in the sacred writings, a description of perhaps the most stupendous and gorgeous Temple that was ever reared by the hands of man—at any rate, the most stupendous and gorgeous ever erected for the worship of the true God. Yet it can scarcely with truth be said that this Temple has served as a model, at least we are not aware of any ecclesiastical edifice having been built after its pattern. Shall we not rather suppose that, having been the only ancient temple consecrated to the worship of the true God, it was intended to be unique; and that having belonged to an economy which was to pass away, it was decreed by Providence to destruction, that no copies might be taken of it for the

temples of Christianity? Still we make no doubt that the Temple of Solomon must have given an impulse to architecture.

It would seem that the Emperor Justinian was fired with an ambition that Constantinople in its temple should rival Jerusalem; for it is recorded of him, that in his admiration of the magnificent temple of Santa Sophia, which at immense expense he had rebuilt, he exclaimed, "I have vanquished thee, O Solomon!" The boast was, no doubt, a vainglorious one, yet it shows on what the thoughts of the imperial architect had been dwelling.

CHAPTER VI.

THE BIBLE THE PROMOTER OF LITERATURE AND THE ARTS—MODERN GENERAL LITERATURE.

THIS is a wide, and also a somewhat intricate field, for the effect which the Bible has exerted on our general literature is the resultant of many complex influences which it would not be easy to specify separately, and likewise of secret influences which it were often difficult to make apparent. You can tell that the dew-drops, which moisten the breath of morning, assist to tinge the rose-bud with its blushing hues; but then these drops fell on each leaf so silently, and were so speedily absorbed by it, that they may be said to hide themselves beneath the very colors which they had helped to dye. And so it has been with the Bible in its effects on our general literature. Not with herald-sound, but silent as the dewy drops, it has insinuated itself into many pages, whose writers were scarcely aware of its presence. They breathed its spirit without knowing it, for it had folded them round as the atmospheric air, which one inhales without thinking of it.

I shall not, therefore, attempt any thing like a full enumeration of the services which the Bible

has rendered to modern literature, but will content myself with offering a few general indications.

(1.) There is the effect which the Bible has had in molding and enriching our language.

In one of his exquisite papers, Addison makes the following observation: "There is a certain coldness and indifference in the phrases of our European languages, when they are compared with the Oriental forms of speech; and it happens very luckily that the Hebrew idioms run into the English tongue with a particular grace and beauty. Our language has received innumerable elegancies and improvements from that infusion of Hebraisms which are derived to it out of the poetical passages of Holy Writ. They give a force and energy to our expression, warm and animate our language, and convey our thoughts in more ardent and intense phrases, than any that are to be met with in our own tongue." Since Addison's time, the number of these Hebraisms imported into our language has been greatly increased, while many similar forms of expression have been imitated from them. And it is amazing how much they have helped to warm our colder northern dialect with somewhat of Oriental ardor; and without taking from its native robustness, have entwined the Saxon oak of our language with the more graceful foliation of Eastern exotics. There are current in our literature innumerable phrases of great felicity, which were

at first peculiar to the poets, but have now found their way into our prose, all of which have distinctly a Hebrew origin. The following may serve as specimens: The wings of the wind—hence, winged words, etc.; the chambers of the East; the chariot clouds; a voice of thunder; the hosts of heaven; a fiery eye; tongues of flame—hence, burning words; thick darkness; the face of the deep—hence, the face of the sky, etc.; the breath of morn; the break of day; the fountain of life; living waters; to drink of immortality; the sting of death; hearts of stone.

But it is the vernacular translation of the Bible which has told most on the English language. And we take it to be a singular phenomenon in the history of literature, that a book written in a foreign tongue, and at a remote age, should have exerted a mighty influence in molding and fixing one of the languages into which it has been translated. Perhaps it is not too much to say that the authorized version of the Scriptures has contributed more than the writings of any native author, prior at least to the close of the sixteenth century, to improve the English language. As a specimen of Anglo-Saxon, it is the purest in the world. An American writer has justly observed, "Our translators have not only made a standard translation, but they have made their translation the standard of our language. The English tongue in their day was not equal to such a work. But God enabled them to stand as upon

Mount Sinai, and *crane up* their country's language to the dignity of the originals; so that after the lapse of two hundred years, the English Bible, with very few exceptions, is the standard of the purity and excellence of the English tongue."

Now let it be remembered that this book, more than any other, has been in the hands of the people; which is to say, the best specimen of the language has been the most extensively read. The effect which this must have had in improving the popular style, can not easily be overestimated. We can not help being of the opinion that many a peasant in our rural districts, and many an artisan in our cities, who without much school instruction have been able to write a letter in passable English, owed it very much to their perusal of the Bible. And to the same cause we should be disposed very much to attribute the singularly-terse, idiomatic, and clear style of the more popular of our self-taught authors; such men, for example, as John Bunyan, Robert Burns, and Hugh Miller. Take the *Pilgrim's Progress*—you have here a work which lettered criticism for long would not deign to notice, which even the gentle and generous Cowper might not venture to name, when awarding to it a meed of stealthy praise, and this because it happened not to be the production of an academic; but which now our most fastidious critics, a Southey and a Macaulay, have openly pronounced to be the finest allegory in our own, or any language. You

can not read many pages of the book without discovering where its unlettered author had learned his style; that it was at that "pure well of English undefiled"—the authorized version of the Bible. On its model certainly he formed his style—Saxon to the backbone, clear as any running brook, and terse as a proverb.

(2.) The influence which the Scriptures have had on the national mind, and hence reflexively, which they have exerted on the national literature.

The art of printing might be said to have given wings to the human mind. For the great thoughts which lay immured on musty parchments, in crypt and cloister, or in the libraries of the rich, flew over the land, when these manuscripts were multiplied into thousands of printed volumes. Now it is a singular fact that, so far as is known, the first book which issued from the printing-press was the Bible. It came like a rush of wind on a stagnant age; sounded as a night cry in the ear of a sleeping nation; or we might say rather, like an archangel's trump at the opening graves of a buried world. Liberty started to its feet at the sound. Intellect shook off its slumber. Personal conscience asserted its right to question, and private judgment its right to inquire. And henceforth the national literature, if it was to gain acceptance with the public mind, must partake of the new life which had begun to pulse in the veins of the nations.

There are two facts noticeable about this time, which are surely significant: the first, that the rise of English poetry, the second, that the birth in England of the Baconian philosophy, were nearly cotemporaneous with the restoration of the Scriptures to the people in their native tongue. The genius of science and the genius of song slept in our land till the influence of a diffused Bible awoke them. And if the successors of Bacon, first prophet of English philosophy, and of Spenser, first high-priest of English poetry—if these, whether they too are also prophets and priests, or only Levites of the temple, must take care to feed its lamps with beaten oil; or with a science and a literature such as is worthy the acceptance of a free, an educated, a reading, a thinking people—it is not too much to say that this is owing to the English Bible.

(3.) The contributions which the Bible has made to the general stock of ideas, which our authors have worked up along with their own.

It is in the nature of literature to absorb into itself and, in new forms, to reproduce whatever, at its several epochs, it finds of existent beauty, truth, and goodness. To it especially applies the language of our great poet:

> "Finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,
> Sermons in stones, and good in every thing."

Now here is a volume which, more than all trees, than all running brooks, than all stones, than every

thing beside, contains in it materials for the alchemy of literature to transform into its own productions. For there are in it the seeds of great thoughts, the outlines of high imaginings, the foreshadows of a mighty progress, the elements of perennial meditations. And what has our higher literature been doing during these three centuries but reproducing one or other of these? For what spring was left to it to drink at with which the Bible had not mingled? What seeding thoughts were left for it to sow which the Bible had not impregnated? What images of truth, or beauty, or sublimity remained to be portrayed which the Bible had not adumbrated? What mine of wisdom could it work where the Bible had not sunk the shaft? What line of progression has it pursued where the Bible had not marked the starting point and indicated the goal? So much is this the case, that if there is turned up to us, on some page of any of our greatest writers, a finer passage in which the thoughts breathe and the words burn, we shall undertake to show that the breath which first vivified these thoughts, and the fire which kindled these words, came from the Bible.

(4.) The authorship of which the Scriptures themselves have been the subject.

A book about which a thousandfold more has been written than all other books put together—

which has called forth the pens of friends and foes—which has supplied the pulpit with its weekly themes for now these eighteen centuries—which has been the subject of professorial prelections and the theme of many poems and an innumerable number of prose compositions, such a book could not fail to have enriched our literature with some of its choicest performances. What scholarship, for instance, is more masculine than that which has been devoted to a defense of the Divine origin and inspiration of the sacred volume, when the subtilties of a Hume, the coarse vituperations of a Paine, the flippant satire of a Voltaire, the polished insinuations of a Gibbon, the sonorous levity and assumptious disparagement of a Shaftesbury, the rambling yet lively declamations of a Bolingbroke, the cowardly sneers of a Collins, the low ridicule and vulgar contempt of a Woolston, the more temperate plausibilities of a Tindal, and the mathematics of a La Place, called forth the pens of a Clarke, a Watson, a West, a Leland, a Leslie, a Campbell, a Hall, and a Chalmers? Or what erudition is more ripe and multifarious than that which has been consecrated to the exegesis of the text and the elucidation of the doctrines of the Bible? Or what specimens of eloquence will surpass some of those which have been written to enforce its sublime and pure morality? Take from our literature those portions of which the Bible itself has been the subject, and what a gap would be made! We should miss some

of the finest productions of the ablest and most accomplished writers of which our country can boast. Nor have we any right to assume that their rare and peculiar talents would have been drawn out so shiningly by any other subject.

(5.) The direct influence of the Scriptures on our religious, and their indirect influence on our profane literature.

With regard to our religious literature, it is almost superfluous to say that to the Bible it owes, not merely its fullness, its strength, its beauty, and impressiveness, but also its very existence. But for this perennial fountain, which seems only to increase the oftener it is drawn from, the streams of our sacred literature could not have so copiously flowed. But now how rich and varied are these streams to instruct the ignorant, to cheer the disconsolate, to gladden the solitary, to comfort the sick and the dying. Surely they have earned a claim to our warmest gratitude, those gifted authors who, by the consecration of their talents to such purposes as these, have proved themselves the true benefactors of their kind. If not theirs to shine the brightest in the temple of fame, yet doth not philosophy nor science weave a chaplet of so hallowed a renown for the brows of their most illustrious. To have produced works which have been a light in the dwelling, and as wells of water in the desert

to a thirsty soul—which have shortened life's road to the wayworn pilgrim, and smoothed the pillows of the dying—this is a praise which the greatest philosopher might covet. But how much higher praise, then, is due to that book whose light these authors have borrowed and but faintly reflect! As planets in the spiritual firmament we hail their beams, and are grateful. Yet are they not its pole-star, much less its sun. Round it, yet at how great a distance, they shine, the satellites only of the central orb—that Book of books which is the fontal source of all wisdom, the quenchless altar of devoutest thoughts, the fullest, fairest, divinest image of truth, purity, and goodness.

With regard to our profane literature, I will not deny that a large portion of it is trifling and immoral; but the Bible is not answerable for this. Even if the authors of these vile productions have borrowed from it beauties which give a seductiveness to their writings and render them more dangerous, *it* is not to be blamed, but only they who have had the audacity to profane its purity to their own impure purposes. The hemlock distils the sunbeams into a virulent poison; but there is no poison in the sun.

But even in the case of immoral literature, the restraining influence of the Bible, though, of course, not confessed, is plainly to be seen. For writers who, had they lived in pagan lands, would have been undisguisedly obscene, are fain to drop a

vail—though often it may be too thin—over their obscenities; for in these lands the Bible is a household book, and vice dares not appear entirely nude in the presence of celestial virtue.

CHAPTER VII.

THE BIBLE THE RESTORER OF LETTERS AND THE ARTS—WHEN EUROPE HAD FALLEN BACK INTO MILITARY BARBARISM.

THE decline and fall of Roman literature and art forms a curious chapter in the history of the human mind. For while the Romans were diffusing a taste for letters and the arts of civilized life over the distant provinces, those letters and those arts were rapidly verging to decline within the confines of Italy, and even within the walls of the capital. Of the causes which led to this decline our subject would not have required us to speak, were it not that certain historians have included among them the introduction into Italy of the new religion, or Christianity.

We are free to confess that, on its first entrance into the seats of classic literature and art, Christianity did not assist to foster them. Nor, in the nature of things, could it have been expected to do so. For if we compare, or rather contrast the two religions, we find the old, with its gods many, its innumerable idols, its fabulous mythologies, its gorgeous temples, its sacerdotal hierarchy; while, on the contrary, the new religion taught the existence

of but one God, had no idols, was without a priesthood, affected none of the pomp of circumstance, but studied simplicity, almost to bareness, in its ritual. Now, as the literature and the arts of a people uniformly reflect the spirit, and to a great extent the very forms of their religion, it must at once be seen that not more diverse were the two literatures, that of Italy and Palestine, than were the two religions, paganism and Christianity. Neither could meet, the literatures nor the religions, without in the first instance conflicting. Then it is well known that to adorn and uphold paganism, pagan literature and art had very greatly contributed. These had popularized it. For the initiated, the priest and philosophers expounded its esoteric mysteries; for the multitude, the poet, the painter, and the sculptor embodied its exoteric dogmas. The sculptor chiseled its idols. The painter delineated its mythology, which the poet had invented. Architecture adorned its shrines, while music gave vocal effect to its ceremonial. And while thus the arts served to popularize paganism, they also clothed it in those æsthetical forms which are calculated to fascinate men of ardent sensibilities and refined taste. It is not, then, to be wondered at if the abuse of letters and the arts by the pagans filled the early Christians with a distaste for letters and the arts themselves. For men do not always discriminate between the lawful utility and the unlawful abuse of a thing. In condemning the latter,

there is a risk that in the first instance they overlook the former.

But even if the early Christians had shown themselves more hostile to pagan literature than they did, this would not warrant the inference that Christianity itself then held polite learning in disfavor, any more than it would be true to say that the Bible has hindered the progress of modern art, because some weak Christians have denounced sacred sculpture and painting.

Any one who will take the trouble to trace the first decline of Latin literature will find that this decline can not be ascribed to the introduction of Christianity into Italy; since, Roman writers themselves being the judges, it had commenced previous to that event. Cicero's "Tusculan Epistles" were penned before any Christian apostle had visited the Italian shores. Yet in these letters the great Roman orator plainly indicates that he was not unconscious of the operation of those causes which in his time had secretly begun to corrupt the genius of Roman eloquence. "In this very faculty," he says, "in which we have advanced from the most imperfect beginnings to the highest excellence, we may, as in all human things, soon expect to see symptoms of decrepitude and the process of decay." The progress of events hastened that decay more rapidly than Cicero could have anticipated. For what he foresaw as to happen probably some centuries hence,

had become matter of actual observation ere yet the first apostles of Christianity had set foot on the coasts of Italy. It were, therefore, an anachronism in history to ascribe the decadence of its literature to an event which was of a later date; and no less a solecism in philosophy to call that the cause which was subsequent to the effect.

It would seem to be a conditional law of development, whether physical or mental, that a precocious growth is followed by premature decay. And in this law, coöperating with certain social influences which intensified its action, we are inclined to seek for the primary cause of the rapid decline of Roman literature. That its rise was rapid, any one acquainted with Roman history must be aware. How that almost at a bound it gained its altitude; was in its zenith almost as soon as it had touched the horizon; shot up with scarcely a twilight to the full noon of its splendors; passed at once from its infancy to manhood. During five centuries Rome had devoted herself entirely to war; for not till after the conquest of Tarentum was the harp heard above the din of arms in the destined capital of the world. Within half a century of this non-literary period appeared Ennius—justly regarded as the father of Latin poetry—Plautus, and Terence. Half a century later Latin literature burst forth with a splendor which still continues to astonish succeeding ages, for then its luminaries were Cicero, Cæsar, and Lucretius. Close on the steps of these followed

the bright ornaments of what has always been considered the golden age of Roman literature. Now here was a growth unprecedently rapid, both as regards the language and the literature. At the end of five centuries, the language was rough, unfixed, and unharmonious; ere the close of the sixth century it was graceful in its idioms, settled in its principles, and pleasing to the ear. At the end of half a century more, the literature had attained its highest excellence. Thus within a century and a half a people who had passed through five centuries without a literature of any sort, rose to be the second greatest literary nation of antiquity.

How much more gradual had been the growth of Grecian literature. Slowly as the oaks of Attica grew the Attic literature. Between the father of Latin poetry and the Augustan age of Latin literature, as we have seen, was only about a century and a half. From the time of Homer to that of Demosthenes was at least three times that interval. And there was another difference in the progress of the two literatures. The genius of the Greeks following the natural order of development, where the literature is original and self-evolved, the lyre had given forth its highest melodies before oratory was heard to raise her voice in the assemblies of the people. Among the Romans, whose literature was not original but imitative, we find the reverse order. For while Demosthenes followed Homer, Cicero preceded Virgil. Of a growth thus natural and so slow, the

literature of Greece would doubtless have proved very lasting but for the disasters of war. When the Macedonian conqueror, after the destruction of Thebes, demanded the delivery of the Athenian orators, he intended a death-blow to Greek oratory, which he well knew had been the chief means of keeping alive the spirit of liberty. He succeeded in his design, but the Nemesis of fame avenged the wrong. For the declension of Grecian literature, which was one of the most signal results of his ambitious policy, proved at the same time a severe and felt retribution of his political crimes. He who had trampled out the fires of genius, and dried up the true sources of fancy and natural emotion, was left to sigh in vain for a great poet to celebrate his exploits. Thus fell Grecian literature, as a noble oak, of ancient root but still vigorous, falls beneath the woodman's ax. But while Rome was still in the very zenith of her military power, Roman literature began to decline. Its tree had shot up too rapidly to be deep-rooted in the national mind; there was a softness at its core, so that when the spirit of liberty was crushed its weakness became at once apparent, and pliable as weak, it speedily was effeminated in the breath of court favor. Its decline was more rapid than its rise. For toward the close of the reign of Augustus, and still more during that of Tiberius, all that was great and elevating in Roman literature had disappeared. Poetry became a parasite of the court, history sank into a hireling pane-

gyrist, eloquence was nothing higher than a mere scholastic gladiatorship.

There are some historians, who while freeing Christianity from the absurd charge which others have preferred against it, of having led, by its introduction into Italy, to the decline of Italian literature, would blame it because when that literature had begun to show signs of decay, the Christians did nothing or little to revive it. But is this fair? Admitting the fact alleged, should that be taken as decisive of their utter want of literary tastes, which was a necessity of their condition. Their sect was every-where spoken against. Not seldom, and against fearful odds, they had to battle for the bare life. So far from having opportunity or the means to cultivate the polite arts, it was not always allowed them to pursue the ordinary handicrafts. Thus it continued more or less, with few pauses of rest, up to the time of Constantine, when the Christian cause, nourished by the patronage of the court, was in the ascendant.

Those who could allow themselves to impugn early Christianity as being either hostile or indifferent to polite learning, must have overlooked the circumstance that the first Christian who wore the imperial mantle was himself a man of cultivated tastes, and did much to foster among his subjects literary studies. We have the testimony of Eusebius, in his History of the Life of Constantine, that letters and the arts were the object of his fond solici-

tude—that his mind had been early imbued with a tincture of learning—that he afterward cultivated eloquence, and composed not inelegantly in the Latin language, while the decrees published by him in favor of the professors of the learned arts, which may still be read, afford incontestable proof of his desire to extend a higher education throughout the Empire. What effects on literature his removal of the seat of government to Byzantium may have exercised is a point about which historians differ, nor needs it that we enter on the question. What we are concerned with is the fact that the first Christian emperor proved himself a patron of polite letters, and that his Christian subjects, now for the first time relieved from their political disabilities, were not slow to prosecute those studies in which hitherto their more favored heathen cotemporaries had been greater proficients.

The new era, so auspiciously inaugurated by Constantine, fixes the date from which it would be fair to begin to reckon the services of early Christianity to the ancient arts and literature, which were now so much in their decline. "From this time," observes Mosheim, "the Christians applied themselves with more zeal and diligence to the study of philosophy and of the liberal arts. The emperors encouraged this taste for learning, and left no means unemployed to excite and maintain a spirit of literary emulation among the professors of Christianity. For this purpose schools were established in many cities,

libraries were also erected, and men of learning and genius were nobly recompensed by the honors and advantages that were attached to the culture of the sciences and arts."

For very obvious reasons, it was sacred more than profane literature which the Christians cultivated; yet they were by no means deficient in the latter, while in the former they furnish some eminent writers, who, besides genius and learning, proved themselves to be no mean masters in style. The works of Ambrose of Milan, of Jerome, of Sulpicius Severus, of Augustine, when compared with the most applauded productions of their heathen cotemporaries, must be pronounced vastly superior. In Jerome the age of Ciceronian latinity might seem to have revived.

With regard to the fine arts, even at this period, when now some four centuries had elapsed, the Christians would seem to have been fettered with a measure of that distrust which the pagan abuse of these arts had so deeply rooted in the minds of their predecessors. When paganism had not yet ceased to decorate its temples with images and paintings, and the old mythologies were still rehearsed in Homeric and Virgilian verse, shall we greatly blame the Christians if a solicitude for the purity of worship kept them somewhat jealous of arts which had for so long been the handmaidens of idolatry? Still, with all their natural jealousy, they were beginning to show that they could dis-

criminate between the uses and abuses of the arts, and gave proofs that they were, at least, not inimical to them. If more than this can scarcely with truth be said, we deem it, in the circumstances, no small praise; for, in troublous times, with earnest men, first impressions or early prejudices are not speedily removed. They might be compared to some parasitical fibers which the vigorous tree carries down with its roots far from the surface.

Two events may be cotemporaneous, proceeding as in parallel lines, or even inter-crossing, and yet have little or no causal connection. When Christianity rose, the heathen arts fell. Here were cotemporaneous events. Yet were they not causally connected; for it was not the rise of the Star of Bethlehem which occasioned the eclipse of the fine arts. These would have sunk had that star never risen. They had begun to sink, as we have seen, before its light had yet skirted the Italian shores. But for the influence of extraneous causes, it is not difficult to conjecture what the effect of Christianity would have been on the progress of the arts. It could not have patronized them in their heathen forms, since it forbade bowing to gods of stone, and wood, and brass, and proclaimed it impossible to grave or mold any similitude of the Divine Being whom no man hath seen at any time. But this would have purified art rather than crushed it. "Painting and sculpture," to use the words of Allan Cunningham, "taking a new direction, and in-

spired with a truer inspiration, would have wrought miracles worthy of the days of Phidias and Apelles."

How then, it may be asked, did Christianity not achieve this for heathen art? To have accomplished it must have required considerable time. It could be the work only of peaceful centuries—a slow reformation, which resembles the labors of the horticulturist in rearing the forest trees, and not that of the woodman who might cut down any one of them in a few hours. But time was not afforded Christianity to work the change which, judging from its accomplished effects in after centuries, we feel confident it would have achieved for ancient art.

The provinces of Germany, which the Romans had not subdued, and the more remote regions of the North of Europe, and North-West of Asia, swarmed with barbarous tribes, who, partly compelled by their amazing fecundity to migrate, and partly fired with a love for warlike adventure and the hope of conquest, poured forth an unsummed and unknown race toward the plains of the sun, to contend with those who called them barbarians for the vineyards and cornfields of Italy and Greece. Their terrible march was as that of the locust-swarms described by the prophet Joel—innumerable and devouring. Even before the Christian era, these Northern nations had given indications of their resolution to move southward; and in the days of the apostles their barbaric armies were on the march. Thus it happened that while the messengers of the cross

were approaching Rome from the East, with the voice of peace and good-will to men, from the North there already sounded the war cry of those Gothic hordes, which were coming in like a flood. Had Rome sooner listened to the message of peace, she would have allied to herself a power which might have so girded up her loosened might, and revived her waning vigor, as to enable her to stem back the torrent which ultimately swept over the Empire. For a time the warlike spirit of the early emperors, and the discipline of the legions, retarded or repulsed these ruthless invaders. But each returning tide rolled further on with increased swell, for there seemed no limit to the myriad numbers which kept pouring forth from their teeming fastnesses, which have not inaptly been called "the storehouse of nations." Nor did the fiercest of the hordes which had already appeared equal in ferocity those hordes which followed, for in savage barbarism the Goths were exceeded by the Huns. Onward swept the wasteful flood, the decaying barriers of the Empire giving way before it; till, at the opening of the sixth century, no country of Southern Europe remained unoccupied by some Northern tribe. It was a flood of absolute devastation. Liberty fled before it, but could find no Ararat. The ancient glory of the Cæsars was quenched in blood. Science and letters were all but extinguished on the earth. The reign of barbarism was reproduced; for though the serpent tribes are known to be fascinated by

the power of music, these savage Norsemen would not be charmed by the harmony of song, nor softened by the sculptor's or the painter's art. Temples were razed to the ground; statues trodden ruthlessly under foot; pictures and books burned as so much brushwood. Nothing was spared which art or literature had reared; and amid the ruins barbarity crowned itself with iron, and with iron shod its heel, which was on the neck of the vanquished.

But where was Christianity all this time?

Let us first say a word upon its preservative, before speaking of its restorative power.

The history of these dismal times strikingly exhibits Christianity as a preservative influence. Its divine, and therefore indestructible vitality, enabled it to survive the sad devastation which followed the irruption of the barbarians. Amid the wasteful commotions which overflowed the seats of ancient civilization, though there was found for Christianity no fixed resting-place, it continued to float secure as the ark of old upon the flood of waters. A power greater than man's kept it on the surface, when in the social whirlpool which was caused by the shock of confluent nations, or rather of conflicting races, every thing else fair and lovely and of good report went down. It still survived, and with it survived the hopes of science and letters. That which has been suspected of hastening their decline alone saved them from utter extirpation. Under the shadow of its troubled branches, though they

could not find a peaceful shelter—for peace was then unknown—yet were they protected from irretrievable destruction. The breath of its undying life was that which kept them in any measure alive.

But Christianity had more than a preservative power. The salt which retards putrefaction can not vivify the dead carcass. The balms and unguents which preserve the flesh, and even the features of the coffined corpse, through thousands of years, can never restore to it the breath of life; for, unwinding the swathed linen, it is only a mummy you uncover. But Christianity has more than an antiseptic influence. It has a vital restorative virtue; and now we are prepared to make good, by a simple appeal to the history of the times, the great fact which forms the heading of this chapter, namely, that the Bible, or—what in effect is the same—Christianity, restored literature and the arts to Europe when it had relapsed into a military despotism, and lay with its crushed head under the iron feet of the barbarians.

The restoration of literature and the arts was not to be effected by the repulsion of the conquerors and the reinstatement of the Romans into their former seats of empire. This was now, indeed, impossible; for the latter had been exterminated in a long succession of ravage and war; and what scanty remnants were spared had either been compelled to seek for shelter in some other soil, or been mixed

up with the invading mass. If, then, civilization was to be restored to Europe, the barbarous conquerors who now possessed it must be civilized.

It was Christianity which achieved this. The fierce conquerors, who had remained unsoftened by all that was civilized and elegant, were not untouched by the preaching of the dauntless successors of the apostles. Seated among the ruins of temples and cities, they would hold their wassail feasts amid the grim accompaniments of barbaric revelry; their swords still in hand, the wine-cup perhaps some human skull, their footstools some broken statue—Apollo or Venus. And thus, during the pauses of runic song and revel merriment, the rude and fierce chiefs who ruled the Gothic tribes would give a sort of surly audience to the preachers of the Cross, who came to tempt them with the joys of heaven, or alarm them with the horrors of hell. Nor did they listen without emotion. There was that about the preachers which was fitted to disarm hostility; they came neither as rivals nor as enemies. There was also about them much which was fitted to command respect from warriors of a bold and independent spirit; they stood before them neither as mercenaries, nor as suppliants, nor as flatterers; while in the doctrines they proclaimed, more especially in the glory or the woe of a future state, there was something which suited the imaginations, and, in some measure, accorded with the natural belief of the Goths, and fitted their minds

to receive the divine truths of the Gospel. While the Christian, besides these secondary causes, will not deem it credulity to ascribe the almost miraculous success of these early preachers to a power beyond their own, which employed them as the human instruments in achieving its own divine purposes.

It has been said, and we can find no reason to doubt the assertion, that painting and sculpture aided largely in bringing about the conversion of the barbarians. According to Allan Cunningham, "the first missionaries, speaking the classic languages of Greece or Rome, were not understood by their Northern audiences till they called in the works of the pencil and chisel as auxiliaries. A Christ on the Cross, a Virgin Mother, a St. John in the Wilderness, the Raising of Lazarus, the Ascension, together with relics of the early saints, all helped to relate the history and the hopes of Christianity, and impress it on their rude understandings. Nor were the barbarians reluctant hearers: so anxiously did they look and listen, that when the first preacher of the Scriptures to the Irish struck, unwittingly, the iron-shod end of his crosier through the foot of one of the princes, the latter bore the pain with fortitude, from a belief that it was a sample of the truths which the other came to teach."

We have here two remarks to offer: The first, that if the fine arts did some good service to the

Christian preachers, in enabling them the better to interpret and symbolize an intellectual and spiritual doctrine to the comprehension of the barbarians, it is not to be thought that very great assistance could be got from any so coarse and rude specimens of art as they had to exhibit. Our second remark is, that any assistance which the arts rendered to Christianity was more than a hundredfold repaid to them by the effect which the conversion of the barbarians exercised on their restoration, extension, and improvement. But for Christianity, there is no reason whatever to believe that Europe would have again been lighted up with a healthier literature and art than that which barbarism had extinguished. To persuade the same rude hands which had broken the lamp to trim it anew, and rekindle it—this was the singular triumph of Christianity.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE BIBLE THE RESTORER OF INTELLECTUAL LIFE—WHEN EUROPE HAD SUNK INTO AN EFFEMINATING SUPERSTITION.

It were both a foul and a wearisome task to wade through that slough of ignorance and superstition which had collected during the Middle Ages, and which lay as a mental dead-weight on the nations of Europe up till nearly the time of the Reformation. Still our subject requires that we shall take some notice of it. The corruptions by which the Christian religion was universally disfigured, at the time indicated, together with the gross ignorance which prevailed, not only among the people, but also the priests who were their professed teachers, are matters of history. Superstition and religious imposture, in the grossest forms, were wielded with a high hand by the clergy, who by such means had attained to an exorbitant degree of opulence and power. As a natural consequence, what small learning might then be found was sedulously kept from the laity. Intellectual culture, if not positively interdicted, was even more effectually checked by being stigmatized with tending to skepticism or heresy, while ignorance received the com-

mendation of being the mother of devotion. To be ignorant and to be devout were accounted much the same thing. Then it might be said, as if the earth must needs have its mental, as of old it had its material chaos, that "darkness was upon the face of the deep." For ignorance mingled with superstition spread a vail over the nations blacker than the shades of Erebus.

As invariably is the case with an ignorant age, this was also an age of servile bondage. And it was the minds and consciences of men which were enslaved. Fetters were then worn such as had never been forged of iron, and drudge-work was then done such as blind Samson had not to do when he ground at the mill, the sport of Philistia's nobles. When the soul that is in a man holds out its thoughts to be put in thrall, and bends its understanding to be girded with the yoke, then is such a man, though all unfettered his limbs, a very slave.

But was there no ark of liberty in this age of bondage? no Pharos during these dismal centuries of ignorance? There were; but we are not to seek for that ark at Rome, nor for this Pharos in the cloistered cell.

The rise and history of the Waldenses, or Vaudois, must be familiar to the reader. This interesting sect was singular, during these times of mental serfdom, in asserting the right of private judgment, and in claiming liberty of conscience for

the individual to worship God according to the prescriptions of his Word. As might be supposed, the standard of religious liberty which they reared was obnoxious in the eyes of a dominant priesthood who had conspired to trample all liberty in the dust. The princes of Europe were inflamed against them, and they were chased by fierce persecutions from place to place, till only a small remnant was left, who found a retreat, fortified by nature, in the valleys of Western Piedmont, where they founded a distinct Church, which continued to keep alive the spirit of liberty till the trumpet of emancipation was sounded at the Reformation. It was not, then, at Rome, but among the mountains of Piedmont, that the ark of freedom rested on its Ararat; and not till it had been tossed by the floods of cruel persecution. And the remarkable fact which, in connection with our subject, falls chiefly to be noted by us, is, that this champion band of true freemen, when all others submitted to be slaves, made the Bible alone the rule of their faith, and avouched it to be the charter of their liberty.

I have said that, during these dismal centuries of ignorance, the Pharos of literature was never entirely extinguished, but had continued to shine, here and there, a light in the darkness; and those who would place the revival of literature and cotemporaneous with the Reformation, post-date it by more than a century. For Dante, whose marvelous poem so took the world by surprise, and has by his

admiring countrymen been styled, with a pardonable pride, the *Divina Comedia*, gave a luster to the fourteenth century. Cotemporary with Dante in the different departments of learning were men of no mean acquirements; but eclipsing them all by his genius, his learned labors, and enthusiasm, was Petrarch. The taste for poetry and elegant composition, for which the public mind had been prepared by the writings of Dante, was raised to a pitch of enthusiastic admiration when the works of Petrarch appeared. And it will not be denied that the Genius of Poetry was beginning once more to be honored, when the ceremonial of a public coronation, which in her days of splendor Rome reserved for the victorious commanders of armies, was bestowed upon a votary of the muses. The crown of Petrarch, with all its attendant applause, reflected back a glory on the age which had placed it on the poet's brow. Nor may we omit to mention, as associated with Petrarch in his noble efforts to revive literature, and all but equaling him in genius, Boccaccio of Tuscany; and, without stopping to trace the symptoms of a reviving literature in the other countries of Europe, I would mention the appearance of Chaucer in our own, who is the acknowledged father of English poetry, and who, though perhaps not in an equal degree, did for the language of his country what Petrarch and Boccaccio had accomplished for the language of theirs—gave it a literary permanence and consistency. His na-

tive style, which Spenser terms "the pure well of English undefiled," formed a standard of composition.

We are, therefore, free to admit, what is sometimes overlooked by those who have written on the supposed total darkness of the Middle Ages, that the revival of letters preceded the Reformation by at least a century. But in making this admission, we must still maintain that only here and there, like some bright, particular star, a brilliant name appeared in the surrounding gloom—the harbingers of a noonday whose twilight had as yet but dimly shown itself; and among these names we shall certainly find but few Churchmen. Nor did this altogether arise from the want of natural talent, but because the general studies of ecclesiastics and of monks, so far from being favorable, were averse to polite literature. The monastery seldom sent forth any other light than what was shed by the gloomy bale-fires of superstition, and rarely was there any other light visible within it except the sickly smoke-flame of an idle, impracticable erudition. In these so-called retreats of learning, the literature was monkish legends, and the philosophy the unintelligible jargon and logomachy of the Schoolmen. There were written and read the lives of saints who had never existed, and the authority of Aristotle was advanced while his pages were left unopened, and as to any acquaintance with the learned tongues, if we except the Latin, this was dispensed

with, not only among the lower clergy, but even among the hierarchy of the Romish Church. Examples of the total ignorance of Greek, not to speak of Hebrew, among the priesthood might be cited, which would be utterly ludicrous were the subject not so grave.

The great event which must be regarded as the chief impulse which assisted the revival of literature in the centuries preceding the Reformation, was what has not inaptly been called "the resurrection of the ancient classics." The noble productions of classic antiquity might be said to have been lost to modern Europe; for, though it still possessed them, it was as a hidden treasure, piled away among the lumber and cobwebs of the cloister. The priceless manuscripts which contained the imperishable thoughts of a Cicero and a Demosthenes had, for the sake of the mere parchment, been blurred over with some obliterating unguent that the legends of saints and similar absurdities might be written upon it, or they lay rotting away, unread and unthought of, on the shelves of the sacristy. How great a loss to literature was the loss of these matchless productions it needs not that we say. But there is an immortality in the works of true genius. Those, therefore, of Demosthenes and Cicero, of Sophocles and Horace, of Herodotus and Tacitus, though buried for a time, could not die. And the time drew on when they were to be disentombed. Once more the literary firmament of

Europe was to be lighted up with the ancient luminaries, which were not any longer to be like those sepulchral lamps which are said to have burned in the tombs, shedding their light on the pale faces of the dead who could not see it.

Dante, whose original genius did so much to awake anew a literary taste, called Virgil his master; while both Petrarch and Boccaccio confessed their obligations to the authors of ancient Greece. And now the cry arose, Where are the lost classics? Popes vied with princes, and cardinals strove with scholars, to search them out; so that in a very short time the works of Cicero, Diodorus Siculus, Homer, Strabo, Polybius, Xenophon, Quintilian, were restored to Europe. The cultivation of the Greek tongue now became the rage of the period. Not to know it was considered as a mark of ignorance, which was singularly debasing in every pretender to letters. Nor did the revived enthusiasm stop till libraries were formed, and schools and universities instituted for the cultivation of the classic languages and literature. While with the eagerness to restore the literary remains of classic antiquity, there kept pace a zeal to discover and collect the monuments of its arts; so that with revived letters Europe witnessed a revival in the arts.

But what was the effect of all this? Did a mental revolution follow? Europe had recovered Cicero and Demosthenes, Virgil and Homer; but did these set Europe free? While the learned devoured the

long-lost treasures of classic literature—its poetry, eloquence, and philosophy—were the great body of the people any less ignorant than they were before? The answer to these questions is but too explicit. The general mind was as much asleep as ever, and Europe still lay helpless at the feet of a priestly superstition. In short, the revival of ancient literature was no emancipation; the recovered classics were not the key which was to unlock the treasures of knowledge for the people. Neither Demosthenes with his eloquence, nor Homer with his song, could break the enchanter's spell which still held the nations in mental fascination. Not yet had arrived the second epoch in the intellectual culture of Europe. For the ruling tone and spirit of the age proceeding mainly, we might say exclusively, from the revival of the ancient literature and learning of the Greeks and Romans, could not be expected to rise much, if any, above these. There were not wanting courtly literati and Latin poets formed on the old classical models; political writers in the Latin tongue, which was still the language of diplomacy; statesmen and politicians of the greatest influence, trained up in the school of Greek and Roman history and politics; and polite dilettanti of pagan antiquity. So that the æsthetic part of ancient literature, and the political application of classical knowledge, were cultivated with avidity; but then these formed the main and almost exclusive object of pursuit, and gave very much of a pagan

complexion to revived literature and the arts. Many of those classical spirits were more conversant and more at home in ancient Rome and Athens, in the manners, history, and politics of antiquity, or even in its mythology, than in their own age, in the existing relations of society, or in the doctrines and principles of Christianity. While therefore we must freely own that the recovery of the ancient classics led to a revival of letters, we must repeat that it failed entirely in producing an intellectual regeneration. Any thing like earnest, practical thought, or original investigation, was entirely wanting among the learned, whose classical enthusiasm, drawing them after objects totally foreign, made them entirely regardless of the existing relations and wants of society; and like an enchanting draught, seemed to waft them into a dream-land that had no connection with the actual world, which then eminently needed their talents and learning to be devoted to practical reform. And while this was the case with the learned, the common people were still the dupes of superstition and the slaves of ignorance. The resurrection of the lost classics then did not bring intellectual life to the nations of Europe.

The Bible also had become as it were a lost book. For buried in the crypt of the cathedral, or stowed away on the shelves of the sacristy, or covered over with heaps of legends on the tables of the scriptorium, few even of the clergy knew any thing about it, and fewer still ever thought of reading it. But

it too was immortal. Though buried it could not die, and the time of its disentombment also arrived. As we had occasion to remark in a preceding part of this work, the art of printing may be said to have given wings to human thought; and so far as is known, the first book that issued from the printing-press was the Bible. Still it might be said of the Scriptures, which were now at length disentombed, that, like Lazarus, they came forth bound hand and foot with grave-clothes; for as yet, with scarcely an exception, they were wrapped up in the learned languages, and not for some time would they be presented to the people in their own vernacular. A book which had been so long held back needed a forerunner to proclaim its coming; one who could herald its approach with a voice of power, which the nations hearing, would be prepared to hail its appearance, and prize it as a treasure invaluable. That forerunner was raised up in the person of Martin Luther. He unquestionably was the modern Baptist, of whom it might be said, that he was the voice of one crying in the wilderness, "Prepare ye the way of the Word of the Lord, make his paths straight."

In the year 1501, there arrived at the University of Erfurth a poor scholar, who, having tasted the sweets of literature, burned with a desire of knowledge, and longed to slake his thirst for letters at one of the academic fountains of learning. The young student showed a singular aptitude, was

endowed with a fine genius, and with indomitable perseverance set himself to peruse the writings of Cicero, Virgil, and other classic authors. He had evidently caught the enthusiasm of the age, which, as we have seen, still reveled with a sort of intoxication among the newly-recovered masterpieces of antiquity. But if these studies fired the genius and gratified the literary tastes of young Luther, they failed to reach the inmost depths of his being. There slumbered in him a power which they could not wake; and which, going out from him, was yet to awake the world.

"The young student," to quote the words of D'Aubigné, "passed in the University library all the time he could snatch from his academical pursuits. Books were as yet rare, and it was a great privilege for him to profit by the treasures brought together in this vast collection. One day—he had then been two years at Erfurth, and was twenty years old—he opens many books in the library, one after another, to learn their writers' names. One volume that he comes to attracts his attention. He has never, till this hour, seen its like. He reads the title—it is a Bible! a rare book, unknown in those times. His interest is greatly excited; he is filled with astonishment at finding other matters than those fragments of the Gospels and Epistles that the Church has selected to be read to the people during public worship every Sunday throughout the year. Till this day he had imagined that they

composed the whole Word of God. And now he sees so many pages, so many chapters, so many books, of which he had no idea! His heart beats as he holds the Divinely-inspired volume in his hand. With eagerness, and with indescribable emotion he turns over these leaves from God. The first page on which he fixes his attention narrates the story of Hannah and of the young Samuel. He reads—and his soul can hardly contain the joy it feels. This child, whom his parents lend to the Lord as long as he liveth; the Song of Hannah, in which she declares that Jehovah 'raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the beggars from the dunghill, to set them among princes;' this child, who grew up in the Temple in the presence of the Lord; those sacrificers, the sons of Eli, who are wicked men, who live in debauchery, and 'make the Lord's people to transgress;' all this history, all this revelation that he has just discovered, excites feelings till then unknown. He returns home with a full heart. 'O that God would give me such a book for myself!' thought he. Luther was as yet ignorant both of Greek and Hebrew. It is scarcely probable that he had studied these languages during the first two or three years of his residence at the University. The Bible that had filled him with such transports was in Latin. He soon returned to the library to pore over his treasure. He read it again and again, and then in his astonishment and joy, he returned to read it once

more. The first glimmerings of a new truth were there beginning to dawn upon his mind.

"Thus had God led him to the discovery of his Word, of that book of which he was one day to give his fellow-countrymen that admirable translation in which Germany has for three centuries perused the oracles of God. Perhaps for the first time this precious volume has now been taken down from the place it occupied in the library of Erfurth. This book, deposited upon the unknown shelves of a gloomy hall, is about to become the book of life to a whole nation. In that Bible the Reformation lay hid."

That Bible in the University library at Erfurth, and afterward the chained Bible which he found in the convent of the hermit of St. Augustine, accomplished in Luther what the ancient classics, for which he had so great a passion, failed to achieve. Behold the broad-browed monk with the eagle eye, in his convent cell, how greedily he drinks in, page after page, the wonderful book, till that broad brow seems to expand, and those eagle eyes to shoot out fire! *Eureka!* the solitary monk exclaims—I have found it: the key of knowledge, the sword of truth, the watchword of liberty. And now—his time having come—with that key at his girdle, that sword in his hand, and that watchword on his lips, this God-sent man goes forth to instruct, to reform, to liberate the world. He proclaims freedom in the name of that book which has made himself free.

He puts the Bible as a trump of jubilee to his mouth, and sounds over Europe the redemption-year of literature as well as theology.

And now let the fact be pondered: the finding of the Bible *did* lead to a mental revolution—the revival of Biblical learning *was* an emancipation—the classic of Palestine *has* proved the key, which at a touch was to open the locked stores of knowledge to the people. And since these glorious days of Luther, on and still on has rolled the tide of liberty, on and still on has moved the march of progress, on and still on has spread the light of truth, till now, the accumulated stores of modern learning, the astonishing discoveries and inventions of modern science, the rapid progress of modern arts, the spirit of earnest inquiry, the spread of education, the reading millions, are a monument of what the human mind can accomplish when it is free; and not less a memorial that it was the Bible which procured its freedom.

CHAPTER IX.

THE INFLUENCE OF THE BIBLE ON SCIENCE.

ALTHOUGH it does not fall within the strict title of this volume, yet it is so congruous with its design that I can not allow myself to pass over, without some remark, the influence which the Bible has exerted on science.

The objection may be heard that the Scriptures have not made any contributions to the physical sciences. But this is surely most frivolous. Suppose an infidel, who is addicted to natural philosophy, to take up the *Institutes* of Calvin; and, after reading a few pages, to throw the book aside with a sneer that there is nothing in it about the laws of motion or the mechanical powers. Or suppose an infidel, who has a preference for mathematical studies, to complain of Humboldt's *Cosmos* that it contains no pure geometry, and does not expound the differential calculus. Or suppose a third infidel, who is fond of natural history, to take exception to Herschel's treatises on astronomy that they are wanting in zoölogy and botany. Or we shall suppose that a fourth, who is a distinguished chemist, faults Brewster's *Optics* because they do not describe the atomic theory; or that a fifth, who is an

enthusiastic geologist, censures De Morgan's work on Probabilities, because it gives no account of extinct genera; or that a sixth, who is addicted to metaphysics, blames Macaulay because, in his History of England, he has not discussed the doctrine of innate ideas. These suppositions imply a standard of criticism so vastly absurd that they provoke a smile by their bare mention. The only fair and reasonable criticism by which to test a book, is whether, first, the subject was worth writing upon; and if so, secondly, whether its author has done that well which he undertook to do. Now the sacred penmen never undertook to write on science. Their chosen subject is theology. The only relevant question, therefore, as to the merits of their works, is whether they have handled this subject well; enlarging its field by solid contributions, and illustrating its several objects by just exposition.

Had the Scriptures made contributions to physical science, then, just in proportion to the amount of these contributions, they would have been useless as a revelation of moral and spiritual truth. Were a Bible to be given to mankind *now* it might allude not only to the facts, but also to the higher generalizations of modern science, and this with good effect, for its readers could understand its allusions. But with what other effect than to bewilder mankind, could the Bible have announced any one of the modern discoveries in science? Fancy it speaking to the ancient Hebrews of the diurnal rotation of

the earth, or of its annual revolution. If it was to teach science, it could only do so by commencing with its first elements: in other words, it must have been an elementary treatise on astronomy, botany, chemistry, geology, etc. And if thus a popular digest of the sciences, it must have been a very voluminous affair indeed. And one might be tempted to ask, if the masses were to master its scientific portions, what time would they have left to study its theology, or its subject proper?

Some reputable writers have expressed the opinion, that there are to be found in the Bible the germs of undeveloped science, prophetic anticipations, or oracular allusions let drop here and there prenunciating modern discoveries, which, though not intelligible in those unscientific ages, do now yield an intelligible meaning when read in the light of these times. But for our own part, we are free to confess, that we would set small value on these so-called Scriptural prelusions of science before its age. We apprehend that the Divine Author of the Bible intended to leave it to man himself to write his own books on physical science. And in this he has acted in accordance with a fundamental principle in his providence; which is, not to proclaim by a voice from heaven truths which are discoverable by the due exercise of man's own reason. No doubt it has taken a long time for man to discover true science. The Baconian philosophy dates only from the sixth millennium in the world's history;

the three *magna opera* on science—Bacon's *Novum Organum*, Newton's *Principia*, and La Place's *Mêchanique Celeste*, are "far between." But then, necessary as these three great works were to its science, the world could better afford to wait for them than for a completed Bible. Accordingly it was given and its canon closed many centuries before the first of these appeared; whereas He who "knoweth the end from the beginning," foreseeing that Bacon, Newton, and La Place would yet arise, did not reveal what they, without a revelation, were to discover.

But the infidel will have it, that the Bible has been obstructive to science.

Now, it is confessed that science has had its martyrs, and that the Church kindled the pyre. With pious indignation and eloquent invective the Fathers of the Christian Church condemned the theory of the Antipodes as being opposed to Scripture. With equal indignation, but employing torture instead of invective, Pope Zachary treated Virgilius as a heretic for broaching this same theory. The council of Salamanca indignantly denounced the notion of the earth being a sphere; and the doctors of the inquisition consigned to their dungeons the illustrious Florentine who proclaimed the theory of the earth's rotation. Nor was it only the Papacy which by an appeal to Scripture attempted to lay an arrest on modern science. Our earlier Protestant divines arrayed themselves against

the system of Copernicus; and one of the most learned and eloquent of them set himself to prove from Scripture, as if it were a very article of orthodox Christianity, that the earth is stationary, while the sun, with the entire host of stars, are the only pilgrim-orbs in the firmament. Among our later divines not a few have set an anti-Biblical brand upon the researches of the geologists.

We can not justify either the scientific opinions of the theologians, or the means which they took to defend them. Still so far in apology we may plead that principle of conservatism in our nature, which makes us slow to give up old beliefs, and which, though often no better than a mental *vis inertiæ*, is yet useful as a counteraction to that love of novelty, which, unless met by an opposing immobility, would in its efforts at reformation produce rather a revolution. Doubtless the theologians ought not to have been so alarmed, and their fears only betrayed their ignorance alike of Scripture and of science. Still, some allowance is to be made for the tenacity even of needless alarm, when what it clings to, as with a death-gripe, are as it believes the very foundations of sacred truth. And there was, it must be owned, some reason for the anxiety of the theologians, since among the philosophers there were those who expressed what looked very like indifference as to the effect which scientific discovery might have on the credibility of the Scriptures.

But we may not content ourselves with being the

mere apologists of the theologians. That not a few of them yielded to false alarms, and when pressed by rash theorists became obstructionists to true science, we frankly admit. But to assert of them as a class that this has been their character, would be a most undeserved calumny. Without neglecting the duties of their sacred profession, or any the less enriching theological literature, many of them have ranked beside the very brightest ornaments of science, have enlarged it by their discoveries, and at the present day are among its ablest expositors. We shall instance, in mathematics, Dr. Isaac Barrow, who dignified the chair to which Newton was not unwilling to succeed; Dr. Wallis, to whom we owe the origin of the arithmetic of infinities; Roger Coles, who discovered a property of the circle, which is justly reckoned among the most remarkable propositions in geometry; Richard Price, whose work on reversionary payments has rendered so signal service to the important subject of life-assurance; Stifels, a German Protestant, who by his *Arithmetica Integra* gave an amazing impulse to the analytic art, himself being the first to devise the modern algebraic notation; Dr. Matthew Stewart, who, in his physical and mathematical tracts, has shown that the old geometry, in such skillful hands, can be made to unravel questions which were thought to require all the resources of modern analytics. And if from the discoverers in mathematical science we descend to its popular expositors, here also the

theologians will be found to occupy a foremost rank, as, for example, Peacock, Cresswell, Bland, Wood, and many others. In astronomy we find the names of Bradley, to whom the science owes the two brilliant discoveries of the aberration of the celestial bodies and the mutation of the earth's axis; of Dr. Samuel Clark, to whom in chief measure is due the honor of introducing the Newtonian philosophy into the University of Cambridge; of Abbé Picard, who, under the direction of the Academy of Sciences, made the first measurement of a degree of the meridian, on which perfect reliance could be placed. In pneumatic chemistry the name of Priestly will always be ranked high. Electricity owes its first impulse and one of its greatest discoveries to a theologian, Volta, of Como. In mineralogy the most celebrated name is also that of a theologian, Abbé Hauy. Mechanical science ranks among its greatest promoters the Rev. Dr. Carpenter, the inventor of the power-loom. In the philosophy of zoölogy the name of the late Dr. Fleming stands deservedly high, and the celebrated work of the Rev. William Kirby, his *Monographia Apium Angliæ*, may claim the merit of first originating the analytic method of investigating nature. In general science few names in recent times will compete with that of Whewell; while, in political science, one of the greatest masters, though his views have not received the attention they deserve, is, in our opinion, Dr. Chalmers. In geology—the science which more

than any other the theologians have been blamed with obstructing—it happens that at once its most profound and most popular defenders are clergymen—Dr. Pye Smith, Dr. Chalmers, Dr. Buckland, Dr. Whewell, Professor Sedgwick, Dr. Harris, Dr. Anderson, Dr. King, and Professor Hitchcock. Among theologians who have not written expressly on science, yet who show an intimate acquaintance with it, as also a thorough appreciation of its importance, we might instance Derham in his *Astro-Theology* and his *Physico-Theology*, Chalmers in his Astronomical Discourses, Paley in his Natural Theology, Sumner in his Record of Creation, and M'Cosh in his Method of the Divine Government. Of such men as these, while they have stood forth as the unflinching advocates of the Bible, it will scarcely be said by any one competent to form a judgment, that they have retarded the progress of physical science. On the contrary, by bringing to its investigation the truth-lovingness of sanctified intellect, they have made it instinct with a higher life, and have haloed it with a brighter glory.

This much on the infidel's calumny against the theologians, that as a class they have obstructed science. And now, as to the Bible itself, we fearlessly challenge the infidel to show how it could possibly obstruct science. On which of its pages does it interdict scientific pursuits? Where does it breathe a spirit in the slightest degree inimical to physical research? Does it unfit the mind for the investi-

gation of natural phenomena? On the contrary, it peculiarly prepares it by presenting the material universe in all its departments as the work of that same Infinite Wisdom to which we owe Revelation itself; and the laws and processes in nature as the one part of the same stupendous scheme of Providence, of which the other part are the operations of grace. The Bible knows but one God, its own author, who is also the architect of the heavens and the earth. And, therefore, when rightly interpreted, it must necessarily concord with the discoveries of science, while it holds out one of the strongest stimulants to the students of nature, as the works of God, to strive to enlarge our knowledge of it.

And we will make our appeal to the history of science itself, whether it has not made the most rapid and solid progress in those lands where the Scriptures are most widely circulated — whether among its pioneers and promoters the sacred volume has not occupied a foremost place. British infidels, at least, might well pause before closing the issue against the Bible. For if our island owns the proud preëminence of being the birthplace of inductive philosophy, it is matter of history that before Bacon, the father of that philosophy, was born, the Bible had found its way to England, and the art of printing had already put many copies of it in circulation. How far these two events—the antecedent spread of Biblical knowledge, and the

subsequent appearance of the Baconian philosophy, both happening within the same century and in the same country—are to be regarded as cause and effect, we shall not presume to say. But this much we may affirm historically, that in no land which the Bible had not visited did *true* science arise; and that when the invigorating and suggestive truths of that divine book had been brought fairly into contact with the strong Saxon intellect of our forefathers, one among them was able to discover, and many among them were prepared to receive, the true method of philosophy.

The assertion is easily made that Christianity has obstructed science, but does the biography of scientific men bear out the assertion? Have those who believed the Bible to be divinely inspired been mere sciolists? or have our profoundest physicists been infidels? It were little in the spirit of the Baconian philosophy to parade the authority of great names—that *idolum tribus*, which Bacon himself has so labored to break. Nor will common justice, not to speak of philosophy, excuse the tone in which skepticism has adulated mediocre talent, simply to suit its own purposes. It is very much as if, in measuring the size of a statue, one were to include the altitude of the pillar on which it is set. We do not deny that not a few highly-gifted men have avowed themselves to be infidels, and we have no wish to disparage their genius. Yet why should infidelity so ostentatiously inscribe their names

above its temple gates? Is their number after all so great? or will they once compare with the high-priests of the temple? Shall we find among them a Galileo, a Kepler, a Bacon, a Newton?—those intellectual giants, taller by the shoulders than any who are living now—men of inventive genius, possessed of more than the merely logical or mathematical faculty, being gifted besides with those penetrative and sublime intuitions which come nearest to the divine. Yet these men believed the Bible, and were not ashamed to confess their obligations to it. Too many of our philosophers have been infidels; but Philosophy herself, in the person of these her most gifted sons, has set her seal to the inspiration of the Scriptures.

The infidel will have it that the Bible has obstructed true science, by teaching a science which is false. We simply deny it. Whenever such an assertion has been made, and an instance specified, one of two results has happened—either the alleged instance has been satisfactorily disposed of, or it has been shown to be one of those residual difficulties which must lie over till science further advances, being in the mean while manifestly not an actual, but only an apparent discrepancy. The history of modern science abundantly carries us out in making this affirmation. The time was when it was in fashion to trump up a whole host of Scriptural inaccuracies in geography, chronology, and astronomy. But no infidel of any intelligence will be

found bold enough to press those objections now. It is mainly on the field of paleontology the battle is now being fought, and we have no misgivings as to the result. The facts of the science itself, in so far as they conflict with the Mosaic account of creation, are but partially investigated; some of them but ill generalized, and many of them not yet verified. Physical theories have been woven out of very slender materials. Cosmogonies have been more hurriedly gotten up than there were scientific data with which to build them. We can calmly wait the advance of science, assured that, as it advances, it will do what it has done before—supply the answer to its own objections; while in the mean time it is gratifying to know, that step by step, the friends alike of Scripture and science have walked abreast of the infidel, furnishing methods of conciliation, at every stage of the controversy, between the geologic and the Mosaic cosmogonies. And one thing the infidel himself must admit, that no chapter in any book has provoked more scientific investigation and speculation, none has done more to stimulate one of our most recent sciences, than the first chapter in that so ancient book, which was written before the birth of science, or even literature, under the shadows of Sinai.

CHAPTER X.

CONCLUSION.

On a review of the subject which has occupied us on these pages, some practical reflections suggest themselves with which we may appropriately conclude.

It must, I think, be acknowledged that in any view we can take of it, the Bible is a most remarkable book, and has had a most remarkable history. In the rapid sketch which has been given of its literary achievements, we have seen that it has stimulated the intellect, refined the taste, improved the literature, sanctified the arts, vivified the philosophy, and given an impulse to the industry of every people among whom it has found a footing. The question which we would press upon the consideration of the reader is, Can this book be other than Divine? Even other evidence apart, might not its literary characteristics, and its literary achievements, be held as proof conclusive of its divinity? For on what known or conceivable law of mental development shall we otherwise account for it? The Bible exists; how came it to be at all? how to be what it is? The simple principle of causation which necessitates the human mind to seek

out for every effect an adequate cause, would seem here to shut us up to one explanation of the origin of the Bible. Any other cause short of Divine inspiration is manifestly inadequate to account for it.

Suppose the greatest geniuses of antiquity—its poets, orators, scholars, sculptors, painters, musicians, its men of letters, and its mental philosophers—had met to compose a book, which should go down to future ages as their joint production; if this book had accomplished one tithe of what the Bible has done we would have proclaimed it a marvel. But here is a book the earlier portions of which were written when literature was in its infancy, and the fine arts were as yet unborn; its later portions being composed, it is true, during the Augustan age of ancient learning, yet not by any of its great ornaments, but by illiterate Galileans—fishermen from the banks of an inland lake, who had never read a Greek or Latin poet, had perhaps never seen a Greek or Latin piece of art, who, even in their own land, which was remote from the seats of classic learning, were deemed illiterate—that this book, written by these authors should be what it is, and have achieved what it has done, is not merely a marvel—it is a miracle.

Either part of our subject, therefore, furnishes a contribution to the Christian evidences. Taking the first, or the literary characteristics of the Bible, we have a book altogether original and unique, not in its theology merely, but also in its method and

style, its poetry, its history, its delineations of nature, and its analysis of human character. Or taking the second part, the literary achievements of the Bible, we have a book equally without a parallel. No other can for a moment be compared with it in the history of mental development—itself receiving no additions since the sacred canon was closed, yet constantly adding to the stock of human knowledge in almost every line of investigation. If we take these two together it appears to us altogether impossible to account for the existence of such a book, except on the admission that it has proceeded from God. The invariable equation of cause and effect seems to shut us up to this conclusion. For dispute about the Bible as men will, there it is, a great fact; and like every fact has in some way to be accounted for. Applying the fundamental maxim in causality to the Bible, simply as an effect, it seems to us simply impossible to find any sufficient explanation of its existence, except one, that it is the Book of God, or in other words, that he who is the Great First Cause of all great effects is the author of this great book. Beyond this, of course, we need not go; but short of this we can not stop, in seeking to account for the bare existence of a book whose contents and whose history are alike so entirely unique.

I have already taken occasion on these pages to avow my belief in the literal *theopneustia* of the Bible. And in reavowing that belief, in this con-

cluding chapter, the reader will allow me to observe that in applying the term inspiration to the Scriptures, I do not define it in the loose sense of many of our philosophers, when they tell us that every great poet and orator is a man inspired—that the writings of a Plato, a Homer, or a Milton, are divine writings, or inspirations caught from God. Were it only meant by this way of speaking the more strongly to confess that genius is a divine gift, and that, therefore, the productions of genius are to be ascribed to him who has endowed it with its intuitive penetration, its creative conceptiveness, and eloquent utterance, we should be far from blaming the use of the term inspiration in this secondary or figurative sense. But this is not what these philosophers mean. They make no distinction in applying the term to the writings of men and to the Scriptures of God. According to them, Plato, Shakspeare, Homer, Milton, were inspired in the same way in which Moses, David, Isaiah, and the other sacred writers were inspired.

I shall grant—to avoid a discussion about mere words—that there is a lower, or non-literal inspiration, to which are owing the works of human genius. But then let it be carefully discriminated wherein this differs from the true literal inspiration which the Scriptures lay claim to.

The difference is not one of mere degree; as if Moses had only a higher measure of the same divine afflatus than Plato or Seneca. But the difference is

one in kind; the divine operation in the two cases being essentially different. If the man of genius—the poet, the philosopher, the orator—is inspired, it is by a certain divine action upon his mind, which may be said to energize, elevate, and clarify it; in which condition it is enabled to perceive and apprehend ideas, which otherwise it might not have perceived or apprehended, and is also enabled to give fuller and more forcible utterance to these ideas, as if the lips were touched with that hidden fire which kindles true eloquence into "words which burn." Thus far, and in this sense, we are willing to ascribe a divine inspiration to the great works of human genius, for we would not venture to deny the possibility, or even the probability, of a certain divine operation on the mind, by which it is raised above more common minds, and, in a sense, carried beyond itself; so as in a higher region to see what before was unseen, to hear what before was inaudible, to comprehend what before was incomprehensible, and to articulate what till now had been unspoken.

But now let the phenomena and conditions of this sort of inspiration be distinctly noted. First, the ideas are *extraneous* till the mind, as best it may, has seized upon them. Secondly, the mind, *for itself*, has to bring them into the sphere of its consciousness. Thirdly, there is no such infallible guidance or supervision, but that the mind may miss the truest forms, and mistake the truest ex-

pression of those great ideas, of which in its intensified state it had caught the floating outlines. Hence, in the fourth place, *supreme authority* does not attach even to the most oracular deliverances of this species of inspiration. Of Nature's hidden verities there may not yet have appeared either poet or philosopher who is the truest prophet; but another more inspired than they—that is, with his mind more elevated and energized by this divine operation, whatever it is—may some time hence better interpret her mysteries. We believe Milton to have had truer visions than Homer, but a third poet may yet arise who shall be more largely truthful than Milton. And now, in the fifth place, when the question is mooted, by what standard are we to test the truthfulness of this inspiration? the answer plainly can not be, that itself is to be the standard of last resort. For this would imply absolute infallibility, which, as we have just seen, does not belong to it. Its deliverances are to be accepted as truth only in so far as they agree with that standard of the true which is within my own consciousness. Homer, Milton, Shakspeare, have no authority over my faith except in so far as the findings of my own conscience, understanding, and taste, accredit and indorse their teachings. No doubt these in me may be at fault, but so might they also be in them. If, therefore, this species of inspiration sets up its *idola tribus*, I can not fall down and worship them.

Let me here recapitulate the characteristics and conditions of this lower or non-literal inspiration. First, the ideas are presented as extraneous to the consciousness. Second, the mind, for itself, as best it may, has to bring them within the sphere of its consciousness. Third, there is no such supervision as would guarantee against mistakes. Fourth, there is therefore fallibility; either actual, or at least possible error. Fifth, there can not then be absolute authoritativeness. Sixth, there lies open an appeal to another canon or standard of certitude.

We have now to mark the total difference in that divine afflatus, which we call inspiration proper, which the Bible claims for itself, and which we are entirely disposed to award to it.

Here we have predicated an operation on the minds of the writers, not merely of an energizing or elevating effect, which left them to seize upon the ideas, and, if equal to the effort, to express them in the fitting words, if such they could find. But here is an operation conveying the ideas *into* their minds, and shaping these ideas within their consciousness, into the exact form and phrase in which the Divine Spirit intended them to go forth as *from Himself*. Now there is infallible certitude here, since the persons thus inspired were not left to select, to seize upon, and to find expression for the ideas, but the infallible Spirit did this for them. These ideas, with the clothing language, had to pass through a human channel; but then a part of

the inspiration was to see that they should not contract the slightest tincture of error or mistake in the passage. It hence follows, that the Bible being in this sense inspired, it is an authoritative standard of faith and morals. If I receive it at all as divine, it must be to bow with implicit submission to its teachings. And this excludes the notion of any other arbiter, standard, or tribunal of appeal whatsoever. Itself is the supreme, the sole canon—the test of all tests—the standard of all standards.

But is reason then to become a blind credulist? Must it abnegate its peculiar function, to sift, to weigh, to decide on evidence? Far from this; of all books the Bible most entirely acknowledges the prerogatives of reason. It asks not, nor will it accept, a blind credence. What it demands is a belief which is founded on evidence. Superstition holds in her hand a mystic scroll, which her devotees, without having examined its credibility, or even read its contents, are expected to believe. But it is not so with Christianity. What she presents to us is no folded scroll, but an open book. This she invites us to read; and challenges us to test it. She claims for it a Divine inspiration; but not that we shall receive it as inspired till we have rigorously tested it by the acknowledged proofs or criteria of inspiration. Here, then, is the function of reason. Revelation owns it, and appeals to it as the arbiter of inspiration, so far as the investigation of the fact is involved. That is to say, reason has

to weigh, sift, and test the evidences which the Bible offers of its inspiration.

But now let the limits of reason be defined. Suppose the evidence, being sifted, weighed, and tested, has been found sufficient. Say that reason is now satisfied on proof that the Bible is the Word of God, then its sole business is to find out the contents of the book, what it actually says, and what is the meaning of its sayings. For now what Revelation demands is implicit faith. It allowed reason full liberty to put the proofs of inspiration into the crucible, but if these have come out approved from the ordeal, then reason is not left at liberty to deal otherwise with the contents of Inspiration than implicitly to receive them, for "thus saith the Lord" is voucher sufficient for reason as well as faith.

Nor could I pardon myself were I to close these pages without saying a word on the religious uses of the Bible. It is indeed a thing of light, and illumines whatsoever it shines upon; a thing of beauty, and adorns whatsoever it touches; a thing of life, and quickens whatsoever it comes in contact with. So has it illuminated, adorned, quickened literature and the arts. Imagination has felt its power, and new visions have risen to its raptured eye. Taste has felt its power, and become more refined. Intellect has felt its power, and its thoughts have gathered greatness. Genius has felt its power, and soared on a loftier wing. It could not have been otherwise. For, to say that it could were to

affirm that the sun shall shine in his strength and yet the darkness of night not be chased away; or, that he shall pour down his heat with the advancing year, and yet the snows of Winter not melt in the valleys; or, that he shall bathe the budded flower in his fostering beams, and yet the bud remain folded till it dies on its stalk. The Bible is the sun in our mental firmament. But then this sun has a double sphere. It moves in two orbits. In a lower, where it makes its solar influence be felt on the taste, the imagination, the intellect; in a higher, where it is intended to reach the heart and the conscience. Now the question which it behooves us to ponder is, whether we are letting it shine upon us only from its nether firmament? Granting that, with what may be called its natural influences, it has reached us so as by its intellectual rays to expand our imaginations and refine our tastes, by its æsthetical rays to elevate our literature and improve our arts, with its thought-creating rays to enlarge our science and extend our philosophy; is this all that we are letting it do for us? Is this, its lesser mission, to be accomplished in us, and the higher mission for which God sent it to remain unaccomplished? Is it neither to regenerate our souls nor renew our hearts? Are we to see by means of it only more clearly, and with a higher appreciation, what we saw before; or, shall we not in meekness strive to learn from it those spiritual mysteries which are hid till it reveals them to the soul? If

this be not the case, what were literature, what were art, what were science, what were philosophy to us then? What were they, even as illumined, amplified, and refined by this wondrous book, if they are all we have learned from it? Would they even then be any thing better than a gilded meteor, which may lend enchantment to the visions of our youth, but which will pale over our dying pillow, and vanish into blackness beside our tomb?

I will not be suspected, after what has been advanced on these pages, of any disposition to undervalue literature, or art, or science; without their humanizing influences this earth had been a wilderness, and man a savage. Through means of them, the very humblest spot—the peasant's patch of ground, the day-laborer's thatch-roofed cottage, the plowman's furrowed field, may be made to smile as a garden; and the poorest son of toil may take intellectual rank—a rank which royal patent can not create—with the nobles of the land. If the Bible does not proclaim this in express statement, it is the spirit of all that it has said.

If, therefore, we are obedient to the sacred volume we shall cultivate to the full measure of our opportunity all useful literatures, arts, sciences, and philosophies. And we shall not be slow to express our gratitude, that it has made these such, that they are worth our studying. When in literature we discover a healthier instruction than is to be found on Homer's page; in art a purer sentiment

than was to be seen in the marbles of Phidias; in science a truer discovery and a more beneficial invention than was revealed to Archimedes; and in philosophy a profounder insight than Socrates attained, we will be careful to ascribe the praise where most it is due—even to that Divine Book, which by its light, its power, its beauty, its living and life-imparting influences, has made literature, art, science, and philosophy, what they are.

But the question returns, Have we nothing more than this to praise it for? It is the book of celestial wisdom, wherein alone can be learned the way of salvation. The only book which tells us whence we are, what we are, and whither we are going. It compasses both worlds: this which is passing away, we leaving it sooner than it passes; and that other which is eternal, where we must spend our immortality. It declares to us how that immortality may be endless bliss, and not endless woe.

I can picture to myself a youth wreathing his self-complacent soul with the flowers of literature, and saying, all is well; but has this youth thought of it, how this book of truth tells him that he is a sinful creature in the eyes of a holy God? Or I picture another youth, as he gazes on the fair creations of art, who, like the former, also says, it is enough: but has this one considered that the book of God tells him that unless his soul is created anew by the Divine Spirit he must perish everlastingly? Or I picture to myself yet another youth, who hav-

ing penetrated into the depths of science or philosophy, is ready to exclaim that he has found the *Eureka* of his life; but does this one reflect that the Book of books declares to him that life can not be his in any sense worth his possessing it, unless his death-doom is canceled by the blood of the Lamb?

May I not, then, without seeming to be presumptuous, close these pages with a charge to these youths, and to all, that they seek till they find the sacred literature of Zion; that they search till they have learned the science of Calvary; that they study, patiently and prayerfully, till they have mastered the philosophy of redemption?

THE END.

DATE DUE

[redacted]

GAYLORD

PRINTED IN U S A.

BS535 .T76
Literary characteristics and
Princeton Theological Seminary-Speer Library
1 1012 00038 3119